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Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia

The Jews and Other Minor Nationalities Under the Soviets

By AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY

NEW YORK
VANGUARD PRESS

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To the sincere men and women of Russia who, despite prison, exile, and death, burned out their lives trying to attain freedom, peace, and brotherhood for the common people.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Avrahm Yarmolinsky

Born in Russia in 1890; received primary and secondary schooling there; studied at the University of Neuchatel, Switzerland; came to the United States in 1913; took his degree at the College of the City of New York and later his Ph.D. at Columbia University; since 1918 has been Chief of the Slavonic Division of New York Public Library; instructor in Russian, College of the City of New York; has translated several Russian books, among others, *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, of which he was also the editor; co-editor and translator of *Modern Russian Poetry*, an anthology; *Contemporary German Poetry*, an anthology; *Russian Poetry*, an anthology; contributor of articles on Russian life and letters to various periodicals, as also to *The American Caravan* for 1927; author of *Turgenev: The Man, His Art, and His Age*; spent nearly half a year in Russia during 1923-24.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE Russian Revolution startled a war-diseased world and ushered in the most daring political and economic experiment of the twentieth century. Considering the vast territory affected, the radical changes inaugurated, and the influence which has been and still is being exerted on international relations, there is probably no greater event in modern history, whether for good or evil. Most Americans forget that a decade has already passed since Lenin and his Communistic followers assumed the power. The period of rapid revolutionary change has gone. Russia is painstakingly, step by step, building something different, something unique, something whose final destination is unpredictable.

America has been a land of discovery from its foundation. Not only in the realm of scientific invention, but in first attaining the coveted North Pole and in exploring other unknown areas of the world, Americans have given generously of life and treasure. Today we are uninformed about a great nation covering one-sixth of the land surface of the world. Russia is cut off by an Atlantic Ocean of prejudice, misunderstanding, and propaganda. We still maintain a rigid official quarantine about the Soviet Government. The result is ignorance frankly admitted by one "of the highest authorities in our Government," who declares this inevitable "in the absence of diplomatic relations." The late Judge Gary corroborated this verdict, "Like many other Americans, I am ignorant in regard to many of

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the conditions which exist in Russia at the present time." *

Every scientist realizes that ignorance is one of the most dangerous forces in the world today. No matter how good or how bad the Soviet system, we should know all about it. Instead we have been ruled by propaganda and hearsay.

The fact is that for the past ten years the Bolshevik government has been operated on, dissected, and laid in its coffin amidst loud applause and rejoicing by distinguished orators in all parts of the world; yet today it is stronger and more stable than ever before in its history and its leaders have been longer in power than any other ruling cabinet in the world. It is high time that we appraise this government as scientifically and impartially as possible, without indulging in violent epithets or questionable and controversial dogmas. Surely the world is not so abysmally ignorant that after ten years of the rule of the Soviet we cannot discover a common core of truth about Russia.

Whether the Communists are thought to be "dangerous enemies of society" or the "saviors of humanity," the facts should be known before judgment is pronounced. No matter what our conviction, we have to admit that the Bolsheviki are hammering out a startling new mechanism in the field of political control. Their experiment deserves scientific study, not hostile armies; intelligent criticism, not damning epithets.

In the past, America has been flooded with propaganda of all shades. Dr. E. A. Ross dedicates his last volume on Russia "To my fellow-Americans who have become weary of being fed lies and propaganda about

* *Current History*, February, 1926.

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Russia." In his chapter on the "Poison Gas Attack" he lists forty-nine stories broadcast throughout America which have been proved totally false. Other writers have pointed out similar facts. Walter Lippman, Editor-in-Chief of *The New York World,* in his illuminating study of all Russian news which appeared in *The New York Times* in the early period of the revolution, has proved the stupidity, inaccuracy, and falsehood of the "facts and fabrications" which have passed as news. Even those articles and books which have tried to deal honestly with the subject have usually been inadequate. They have either been too general or they have been specific but too brief to be of more than passing value. In all too many cases they are based on only a few weeks of observation in Russia by someone who did not know the native language.

The present series is designed to meet the need for reliable, accurate information on the major aspects of present-day Russia. We have tried to make it as scientifically accurate as is possible in the treatment of contemporary phenomena. It has been our aim in selecting each author to choose someone who, because of previous experience and training was peculiarly well qualified as an authority on the particular subject to which he was assigned. In every case we have chosen those who either have made a prolonged stay in Russia, actually writing their volumes while in the country, or those who have made a special trip to Russia to secure the facts about which they write. We have tried to make the series inclusive, covering the more important aspects of the many-sided developments in Russia. Each volume is devoted to one major subject alone. People want detailed, accurate facts in readable form. Here they can be found, ranging all the way from an analysis of the governmental machinery to the school

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system. Within this series some repetition has been inevitable. The editor believes that this is distinctly desirable since each author expounds his subject in his own way, with an emphasis original to him and in the light of his own data. No effort has been made to eliminate contradictions, yet they are surprisingly few. Where the testimony of all is unanimous, the conclusions reached are overwhelmingly strong. Where differences exist, they should stimulate the reader to weigh the evidence even more carefully.

It is probably too much to hope that propaganda organizations will not endeavor to discredit any such genuine effort to arrive at the truth. Perhaps it is sufficient to say in refutation that no similar attempt to secure the facts about Russia from trained experts has yet been made in America or elsewhere, so far as the writer is aware. There is scant ground for intelligent criticism unless similar scientific studies have been made with conflicting results; even then time alone can proclaim the final truth. No sincere and unprejudiced scientist will deplore an effort to study and describe what has happened in the first experiment the world has ever seen in applied communism, even if mistakes have been made in the analysis.

These volumes on the whole not only contain the most valuable data so far available, but they will probably remain of permanent worth. In the future no real historian endeavoring to master the facts about the great political upheaval in Russia will care to ignore them. Is Russia the most tyrannical dictatorship of bloody despots that the world has ever seen? Is Russia the first step in the building of a new world order whose keynote will be industrial democracy? We do not pretend to give here the final judgment of history,

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but we do claim to have made a sincere effort to portray the facts.

Thanks are due to the authors who have so painstakingly sought to present the truth as they found it, to the publishers for their assistance in making this a notable and usable series, and to all those whose labor, whether by hand or brain, has helped to give these volumes to the American public.

JEROME DAVIS,
Yale University.

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PREFACE

THIS study is concerned with the nationality problem bequeathed by the Russian empire to the Soviet commonwealth, and the manner in which this unwelcome inheritance is being administered. The introductory chapter contrasts the attitude toward the subject peoples of the imperial government with the policy of political and cultural self-determination inaugurated by the Soviet regime. The first part deals in some detail with the altered status of one particular ethnic group—the Jews—and reckons the gains and losses resulting to it from the new order. Although the peculiar history with which this group is burdened sets it apart from the rest, the treatment accorded it exemplifies, to a large degree, the Soviet policy toward the formerly oppressed nationalities. This is enlarged upon and, it is hoped, clarified in the more general chapters with which the book concludes. Here the effort is to convey something of the new political, economic, and cultural life to which the emancipated peoples have awakened.

The sources drawn upon for specific facts are listed in a bibliography appended to the text. They include not only material available in print, but a considerable number of manuscript items. For these I have to thank the administration of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which courteously furnished me with the unpublished reports of its representatives, as well as with the draft in manuscript of a portion of the voluminous history of the organization, which, when completed, will be a work of first importance. I am

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grateful to Mr. Maurice Hindus for his kindness in turning over to me some relevant printed matter that he had collected on one of his frequent trips to Russia. The interest which Dr. Joseph A. Rosen, Director of the American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation, took in this book makes me very much the debtor of the man who has labored so splendidly to further the Jewish land movement in Soviet Russia. He was good enough to put at my disposal published and unpublished reports and studies, and, above all, to give me the advantage of his discerning comment on a large portion of the text.

A. Y.

August, 1928

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CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
	Editor's Introduction	v
	Preface	xi
I.	Introduction—The National Question	1
	Part I	
	THE JEWS	
II.	A Look Backward	13
III.	On the Eve of the War	24
IV.	Fire and Sword	38
V.	Between the Hammer and the Anvil	48
VI.	Reconstruction	62
VII.	The Jewish Farmer	77
VIII.	Forward to the Land	89
IX.	The Political Situation	104
X.	Cultural Aspects	116
XI.	Looking Ahead	132
	Part II	
	OTHER MINOR NATIONALITIES	
XII.	The Peoples of the Union	141
XIII.	Self-Determination	149
XIV.	The Road to Equality	159
XV.	The Cultural Awakening	170
	Appendix	
	Table of the Peoples of the Soviet Union	183
	Table of Soviet States	184
	Bibliography and Reference Notes by Chapters	187

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THE JEWS UNDER THE SOVIETS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION—THE NATIONAL QUESTION

THE French revolution proclaimed the liberty, the equality, the fraternity of all men; the Russian revolution proclaimed the liberty, the equality, the fraternity of all peoples. If one were to sum up in a word what the proletarian dictatorship has meant to the formerly subject nationalities of the late empire, one might say that it has translated them from the shadows of oppression to a place in the sun. While the old regime, particularly in its last years, was based upon the supremacy of the Great Russians, the new order is opposed to the domination of any one national group by another. Those who controlled the destinies of the empire acted upon the belief that to hold it together it was necessary to suppress the cultures of the non-Russian elements. The Communists who steer the Soviet ship of state act on the theory that the strength of the socialist commonwealth depends upon the voluntary cooperation of peoples enjoying political and cultural autonomy. Indeed, the Soviet Union is essentially an alliance not of states but of peoples, that is, of peoples led by the workers and peasants. The chief plank in the national policy of the new regime is self-determination for all subject nationalities, in so far as

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this principle is compatible with the Communist scheme of things. As long as the nations of the Union, so various in physical type, economic status and cultural tradition, are loyal to the new social order, they are free to realize their separate potentialities.

History, in assembling an agglomeration of peoples under Russia's harsh sovereignty, brought into being the so-called "national question." This was among the most weighty and urgent matters of domestic policy which confronted the government set up by the triumphant revolution of March, 1917. That the problem became so galling and knotty was largely the fault of the old regime. The treatment accorded the subject nationalities was, indeed, one of the worst aspects of Russia's notoriously bad government. During the last half century of its existence the Petersburg administration pursued a narrow, coercive, illiberal policy which was bound to cause profound discontent among the non-Russian elements of the population, particularly those at all bent upon maintaining a distinct group life of their own.

Not that legal disqualifications attached to race or religion. True, the law distinguished between ordinary citizens and *inorodtzy* (subjects of alien birth). These formed a special estate which included, beside the Jews, the aborigines of Siberia and Turkestan and some of the more primitive tribes of the European part of the country. With the exception, however, of the Jews, whose legal status is discussed in some detail elsewhere in this study, the inorodtzy leading a settled life enjoyed all the usual rights, while the nomad and roving "aliens" were on a par with the peasant class. The privileges of tribal chiefs and the peculiarities of local clan organizations were safeguarded. Such was the legal theory.[1] The practice differed from it considerably

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The idea of a super-national State failed to take root in Russia. The empire remained Russian, in a narrow sense, although it had spread far beyond the ethnic frontiers of the people that was historically identified with it. The new age had merely intellectualized and refined the crude official nationalism of earlier centuries. Under Nicholas I the doctrine arose that the Government rested upon the triune principle of orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. By the latter was meant the language, the customs, the institutions, the folk-ways of the dominant race: the Russians. The intolerant aggressive nationalism of the administration increased, particularly after the Polish rebellion of 1863 and the assassination of Alexander II, and under the last two Romanovs it was erected into a system.

The policy of forcible Russification was rigorously pursued. Local vernaculars had never had any standing in the courts and Government offices; and in time steps were taken to debar them from school-rooms, theatres and public halls. The official language alone was held to be the proper medium of instruction, of literature, of the stage. The use of the other languages, some of them ancient and cultivated instruments of expression, was considered subversive and was definitely discouraged. During the nineteenth century there were some deviations from this course. To combat the German influences in the Baltic provinces, the Petersburg administration all but fostered the cultural aspirations of the Letts and Esthonians, and, as a move against Turkey, it kept hands off the Georgian and particularly the Armenian nationalist movement. In the nineties the Buryats were granted home-rule of a sort, and the Government actually financed a newspaper in the vernacular,—all to keep the natives from deserting to China across the frontier. But these gestures of liber-

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alism were soon abandoned in favor of the usual restrictions and persecutions.

In order to appreciate what the non-Russians had to contend with, let us look at the typical case of the Ukrainians. Under Peter I it was forbidden to print a Ukrainian primer, and under Catherine II Russian became the language of instruction in all the southern schools. But it remained for a minister of Alexander II to declare: "There never was, there is not now, and there can never be any separate Little Russian language; this dialect, which is used by the populace, is Russian corrupted by Polish influence."[2] In 1875 the importation as well as the publication of all Ukrainian printed matter became a criminal offense. The publication of historical documents and of fiction was allowed, but the latter had to be spelled as though it were Russian. Plays and public readings in the vernacular were also forbidden. Thereafter the Gospels in Ukrainian had to be smuggled in from Galicia, and the wistful Little Russian songs had to be sung at concerts in French translation.

So disastrous was the effect of this measure upon the cultural level of the masses that in 1904 the Committee of Ministers was forced to open the question of permitting the use of the proscribed tongue. Several exalted public servants and three august learned bodies as well expressed themselves in favor of abolishing the prohibition. The Academy of Sciences published a long memoir to the effect that the Little Russian language was entitled to recognition as a separate full-fledged Slav tongue. Accordingly in 1906 the ban was lifted, yet not wholly: books in Ukrainian were still barred from public and school libraries. At the outbreak of the war the Ukrainian press was again silenced. It arose from the dead with the trumpets of the revolution.

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Everywhere, and especially in the more industrialized sections of the country, such as the Polish provinces, this policy of Russification proved a drag on the cultural, and consequently on the economic progress of the non-Russian population. The imperial government has been accused of having been partial to the economic interests of the dominant people in less oblique ways. A leading Ukrainian historian finds that the administration favored the Baltic rather than the Black Sea exports and imports, to the detriment of the Little Russian south.[3] The income derived by the State from the southern provinces was twice as large as the outlay on their behalf.[4] The petroleum industry of the Caucasus, developed largely with the aid of foreign capital, was merely a hen which laid golden eggs for the Treasury on the Neva. If generous sums were spent on railway construction and irrigation in Turkestan, this was done chiefly to supply the textile mills of central Russia with raw material, and to provide the other industries of that region with a ready market for manufactured goods. It was no mere accident that Russia's military operations in Central Asia, where cotton had been grown since the earliest times, were particularly active in the sixties, when the looms of Moscow stood idle as a result of the cotton famine caused by the Civil War in the United States.

The Russians carried "the white man's burden" in their Asiatic possessions with as much glory as the white man did elsewhere. Hordes of Kalmucks repeatedly fled from Russian oppression to China. In Siberia, too, the aborigines who were not exterminated in the process of the conquest of the country suffered heavily at the hands of a rapacious administration. The social diseases and a ruinous fondness for spirits were among the more durable gifts of the superior civilization. Everywhere the natives were treated as helots,

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mercilessly exploited, driven into waste places, their best lands being handed over to Russian settlers: Cossacks and landless peasants from the interior. By 1916 nearly 22,000,000 dessiatines * were occupied by Russian colonists in the Kazak (Kirghiz) lands.[5] For years the Government had been sowing dragons' teeth, and during the war it reaped some of the crop. In 1916 Turkestan was swept by an armed uprising of natives. This was caused by a peremptory order drafting 200,000 "aliens" for military service in the rear. Among the Kazaks the rebellion was in part a protest against the predatory colonization policy of the Russian authorities.

It goes without saying that official efforts to Russianize the population were not crowned with success. Here and there the upper classes were won over, but the masses resisted assimilation. In fact, all through the second half of the nineteenth century a nationalist movement was steadily gaining ground among the lesser peoples of the empire. Some of them, notably the Poles, organized secret schools of their own. The Lithuanians transferred their presses to Prussia and the United States, the Ukrainians drew spiritual sustenance from Lwow in Galicia, and in the east Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic propaganda raised its head. Ironically enough, the young men and women who went through the Russian schools and then took up their life work among their own people were often the ones to furnish the movement with intellectual leadership.

This insurgent nationalism naturally found itself aligned with the forces hostile to the existing regime. The subject nationalities expected from free Russia what autocracy withheld: recognition of the non-Russian languages, home-rule for the groups occupying a continuous tract of land, and cultural autonomy for the

* 1 dessiatine = 2.7 acres.

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others; in short, the right to live their own group life without molestation. The brief quasi-constitutional era brought much discouragement to the non-Russians. After 1907 the Imperial Duma proved more intolerant of their aspirations than the Administration itself had been. And so on the eve of the revolution the lesser peoples felt more keenly than ever that they were the step-children of the empire, frowned upon, discriminated against, robbed of their patrimony, insulted and injured.

No sooner did freedom come than the centrifugal forces within the country asserted themselves: the Finns, the Poles, the Baltic peoples, the Ukrainians, and several others, demanded autonomy and even independence. The program of the Provisional Government, as published on March 16, 1917, included "the abolition of all social, religious and national restrictions." [6] Subsequently, the Kerensky cabinet took a number of half-hearted measures to allay the clamor, but in the face of the growing separatist tendencies it refused to pass upon the status of the nationalities, on the ground that this was a matter that the future Constituent Assembly alone had the authority to settle. On October 8, 1917, it promised to carry out these measures among others: "Recognize for all nationalities the right of self-determination on such lines as the Constituent Assembly shall determine; work out and issue laws that will give minorities, in places of their permanent residence, the right to use their native languages in schools, courts, institutions of self-government, and in their dealings with the local State organs; establish, in connection with the Provisional Government, a council on nationality affairs, in which all the nationalities of Russia will be represented, for the purpose of preparing material on the nationality question for the Constituent Assembly." [7]

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The Bolsheviks who came into power exactly a month after the publication of this pronouncement cut the knot which Kerensky's Government had but prepared to untie. On the seventh day of its existence the Soviet Government issued "The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia." This document, conceived in the flamboyant, slovenly style of the early Soviet proclamations, condemns the Czar's treatment of subject nationalities as a policy of pitting one people against another, and the attitude of the Provisional Government as one of distrust, hypocrisy and provocation. To effect a union among the workers and peasants belonging to the various peoples of the former empire, the Declaration runs, an open and honest course of action must be pursued. Therefore the Council of the People's Commissars pledges itself to the following principles: (1) "The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia. (2) The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the extent of separation and the formation of independent states. (3) The abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions. (4) The free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting Russia." [8]

These principles were old revolutionary slogans. Since its very inception thirty years ago, the Russian Social-Democratic Party has advocated self-determination, in the sense of the right to secession, for all the peoples of the empire. The first post-revolutionary conference of this Party (April, 1917) came out emphatically in favor of the right of the individual nationalities to separate and form sovereign states. The other demands formulated by the conference were: no privileges for any one group; no official language; self-ruling regions carved out so as to fit the ethnic map of the country, but for the scattered groups no cultural

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autonomy, i. e., education and other cultural activities must not be taken out of the hands of the State and handed to national extra-territorial diets. The Bolsheviks were particularly emphatic in their protests against the forcible retention of any people in the empire.

The doctrine of self-determination was a cardinal article of Lenin's faith. The Bolshevik leader elaborated it in a paper written a few months before he stepped out of the shadows of his exile. He was for the unlimited right to secession not because he would have liked to see the empire broken up into small national states, each boasting a separate sovereignty. Nor did he lean toward federalism, as against centralization. Quite the contrary. Nothing seemed more desirable to him than the obliteration of political frontiers and the merging of peoples. To him the advocacy of self-determination was merely an extreme gesture of opposition to national oppression. A union to be strong must be voluntary. Give the subject peoples the right to secede at any time, and the fewest will take advantage of it. "Just as mankind," he wrote, "can come to the abolition of classes only through the transitional period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can come to the inevitable fusion of nations only through the period of complete emancipation of all the oppressed nations, i. e., self-determination." [9]

In the Communist political philosophy, the struggle of oppressed peoples for emancipation is linked up with the larger issues of the fight for socialism. Yet the right to self-determination is automatically annulled when it conflicts with the supreme purpose of achieving the new social order. The resolution on the "national question" adopted by the Social-Democratic Party in 1913 has this provision, which is repeated in the resolution of

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1917: "The question of the right of nations to self-determination (i. e., the guarantee of a wholly free and democratic method of solving the problem of separation) must not be confused with the question of the fitness of the secession of this or that individual people. This last question the Social-Democratic Party settles in each case independently from the standpoint of the interests of the proletariat's class struggle for socialism." [10]

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PART I

THE JEWS

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CHAPTER II

A LOOK BACKWARD

WHILE the Jewish citizenry of most Western countries grew up as the result of gradual immigration, Russia found herself possessed of a considerable Jewish population suddenly. The unwelcome gift came to her with the annexation of Polish territory. Each of the four slices of Poland that she took, in 1772, 1793, 1795, and 1815, respectively, contained a large contingent of Jews.

Thus, the history of the Jewish people in Russia is, properly speaking, only a century and a half old. Not that Jews never appeared on Russian soil before the days of Catherine the Great. In the early centuries of Russian history there was some Jewish immigration into the valley of the Dnieper, which was then the seat of Russian civilization. Indeed, in the ancient city of Kiev there was a large, prosperous community of Hebrew traders and tax-farmers. But it must be remembered that the south did not participate in the formation of the Great Russian State. In Muscovy, people of alien race and faith were looked upon with fear and dislike, so that such foreigners as were admitted were treated as unclean and denied permanent residence. The Israelites particularly suffered from this intolerance. Ivan the Terrible barred them from his dominions, but this decree could no more be completely effective than similar measures which his successors were to enact. Jewish merchants from Poland-Lithuania continued to make their way into Muscovy occasionally.

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Since the Jews hailed from Poland, Russia's armed conflicts with the Poles in the seventeenth century increased the anti-Jewish feeling. Peter, who had no prejudices, admitted Jewish financial agents to his new capital. But the bigoted women who ruled the empire after him made repeated efforts to clear the country of the noisome race. Under the pious Empress Elizabeth the ideal of a Jewless Russia came near realization. Catherine II dared not, in spite of her liberalism, defy the anti-Jewish tradition: the manifesto of 1762 threw the gates of the country open to all foreigners "except the Jews." When, ten years later, the first partition of Poland brought a large Jewish population into the empire, they faced a hostile attitude on the part of their new masters and found no community of co-religionists owing allegiance to the Russian crown.

The Jewry of Poland-Lithuania had been formed, by its long and troubled history, into a fairly homogenous people. From times beyond memory Jews had been drifting into this territory, the stream of immigration rising high during the Crusades and in the wake of the Black Death. They came chiefly from Germany. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Jewish population of Poland numbered about half a million and was deeply involved in the economic life of the country.

The kings had, for the most part, welcomed them as an economically useful element, and looked to them to develop the resources of the land and to enrich the meagre treasury. Wealthy Jews acted as financial agents for the crown, leased royal and private estates, engaged in industry on a large scale, and also in export and liquor traffic. Those less well to do were retailers, artisans, inn-keepers, and some few of them, farmers. As the king's power waned and the gentry came to the fore, the position of the Jews grew less secure. In the six-

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teenth century ghettos were introduced, ritual murder trials became more frequent, anti-Jewish riots were not unusual, and such important rights as that of trading were curtailed by local authorities.

Nevertheless, for a period of two or three centuries, ending with the close of the Thirty Years' War, Poland was a great and flourishing center of Jewish life, comparable to medieval Spain. The Jewish communities, headed by a powerful rabbinate and the wealthier class, had complete self-government, not only in cultural, but also in administrative and judicial matters. The level of literacy among the masses was high, while Talmudic learning knew a golden age, and the Hebrew printing-presses of Cracow and Lublin rivalled those of Venice and Prague.

The Jews lived in every part of the country, including the southern borderland: the Ukraine. This rich territory was thinly populated with an unruly, half nomadic peasantry of the Orthodox faith. In the second half of the sixteenth century Polish landowners, having carved out estates for themselves in this region, proceeded to subjugate the natives, while the Catholic clergy, with the aid of the king, made an effort to stamp out the Orthodox Church. The bitterness of the class conflict was intensified by the racial conflicts and further inflamed by the religious warfare. The situation was fraught with danger for the Jews, who had come thither with the petty gentry and the serfs imported by the nobility from Lithuania and Poland. As stewards of the landowners, as tax-farmers and dispensers of liquor, they represented in the eyes of the exploited peasantry the power that was grinding them down, and the feeling against these supposed oppressors ran high. In the words of a contemporary, they were "the claws" with which the gentry skinned the peasantry. So that in the

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jacqueries which broke out under the leadership of the freebooting Cossacks who lived on the hem of the region; the Jews were massacred along with their Polish masters. The year 1648 initiated a bloody decade, in which about 100,000 Jews died under the most revolting circumstances, and hundreds of Jewish communities were annihilated. They were battered about by Cossacks and Poles, and their situation was further aggravated by the Polish-Muscovite quarrel and the Swedish invasion. In eastern Ukraine, which, after 1667, was definitely incorporated into Muscovy, the Jewish communities were all but wiped out, and in the western Ukraine perhaps one-tenth of the Jewish population survived the disasters.

In due time the harrassed people recuperated after a fashion, but although they restored their Kahals, or communal governments, they could not fully reestablish themselves in a country which was going downhill. Deprived in large part of the king's protection, the Jews were at the mercy of the contending social classes, and were kicked about like a football. The year 1768 repeated in miniature the horrors of 1648: the Ukrainian Cossacks rose again, and Poles and Jews were slaughtered by thousands. Four years later the first partition of Poland took place: the house so long divided against itself began to fall apart.

The cultural life of the Jews reflected the economic decline and the greater insecurity of their position. Rabbinical learning fell upon evil days and secluded itself more and more in a cramped scholasticism. Religious observances and tabus increased and grew more rigid. While the hedge of the law preserved the identity of the people, it also cut them off from contact with their neighbors and enclosed them in a restrictive atmosphere. Oppression without and repression within made

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the masses, especially in the Ukraine, receptive to the Messianic fantasies that fired the Jewish world in the seventeenth century. In the next century the south, where the rabbinate was weak and the Jews had less Talmudic learning, saw the rise of Hasidism, a remarkable religious movement, which was a mystic and withal genial kind of Jewish protestantism. This sect, with its doctrine of childlike faith and direct joyous communion with God, with its *Zaddiks* (spiritual guides, saints and miracle workers), satisfied the need of a simple folk, who had no head for dusty book-learning and no heart for rabbinical asceticism. Secular culture, which flourished among the German Jews, was frowned upon both by the Hasidim and their opponents, the rabbinical party.

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was crumbling to pieces, the life of the Jewish people there presents this picture. Townsmen and villagers, they were scattered throughout the country. Many of them were merchants, especially exporters of agricultural products. In the outlying provinces half of the artisans were Jews. Only fourteen Jewish families in the whole country were engaged in agriculture, since the Polish laws prohibited even a converted Jew from owning land. There were many without settled occupations, and a great number of paupers. On the manorial estates they leased pastures, dairies, mills, forest land and fisheries, and the landowners also let out to them the right to brew and sell liquor in taverns, but for all that, they were an harassed, debt-ridden lot. Excluded as they were from mercantile and craft guilds, the difficulties of urban competition had forced them increasingly into these rural occupations. It was especially their participation in the liquor traffic, in the towns as well as in the villages,

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that brought upon them the accusation that they were ruining the peasantry. Although they constituted one-eighth of the population (there were 900,000 of them, exclusive of those in the White Russian provinces), and although they were a vital part of the economic organism of the country, they enjoyed no political or civic rights and they were alien to the culture of their masters. Surrounded by hostility and cut off further by the wall of their own customs and manners, they lived apart, a state within a state. It was this peculiar, close-knit people, abject and poverty-stricken, having in its immediate remembrance a history of bloody tryanny, but proud of its ancient tradition of piety and learning, that imperial Russia had to accept along with the territory she annexed.

The White Russian provinces which Catherine II received in 1772 as Russia's share of the first partition of Poland contained about 200,000 Jews. The empress granted them inviolability of their former privileges, but by enrolling them in the burgher class and the merchant guilds, she automatically deprived them of their right to live in the villages, where so many of them had resided under the Poles. Soon restrictions upon their economic activities began to spring up. And then an unprecedented disability, the cause of measureless sufferings, fell upon them. The despised race found itself confined by law to a restricted area, which roughly coincided with the territory they occupied at the time of annexation. The Pale of Settlement was adumbrated in 1786 and definitely created December 23, 1791, though the term originated later, in the reign of Nicholas I. As Catherine was anxious to colonize the newly acquired, thinly populated provinces of Ekaterinoslav, Tauris and Kherson, these also were opened to the Jews. The second and third partitions, in 1793 and

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1795, gave Russia the southwestern region and Lithuania, as well as Courland. This territory, together with the provinces of Kiev and Cheenigov, and Novgorod-Seversk, were included within the Pale of Settlement. Thus, the entire Ukraine, and even the city of Kiev, was now accessible to Jewish immigrants.

With the opening of the nineteenth century, measures were passed which aimed at "enlightening the Jews." They were allowed to open their own schools for secular culture, Russian, Polish or German being obligatory, and their children were granted free access to all the Russian schools and universities. The Statute of 1804 contained other provisions which were intended to assist assimilation. On the economic side, this so-called "Jewish constitution" introduced a radical and disastrous change. Even during the previous century the Government had believed that the Jews were a commercial and industrial people who properly belonged in the towns, their activities being injurious to the peasantry,—this last notion being an inheritance from the Poles. As a rule, official investigators, not daring to go to the root of the matter and declare serfdom responsible for the miseries of the rural population, blamed the Jewish publicans, shopkeepers and produce-merchants. The new law was the fruit of this opinion. Jews were prohibited from leasing land in any village or hamlet, and from keeping taverns there, selling liquor in them, or even living in them except on the course of a journey. Agriculture, industry and the crafts were offered as substitutes for the abolished occupations, and various inducements, most of them with strings attached, were offered to those ready to engage in these activities. This meant that from two to three hundred thousand people, mostly poor, were, within four years, to be expelled from their village

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homes and forced upon the towns, which could hardly support their own population. In effect there was to be created a Pale within the Pale, an overcrowded urban prison for the suspect race.

The masses failed to take advantage of the new educational opportunities offered, for fear of proselytism. As for the encouragement of productive occupations, it resulted in the establishment of a few agricultural colonies in the south. The expulsion from the villages was carried out only in part, resulting in misery to thousands of Jewish families and injury to the native population as well. In 1809 the deportation was temporarily stopped. The measure was, however, not repealed, but hung over Jewry like Damocles' sword,—the thread breaking now and again. In the reign of Alexander I the Jewish population increased greatly through the annexation of Bessarabia and the kingdom of Poland. The latter territory was added to the Pale, but for the next half century the Jews could not leave its confines nor could Jews from the rest of the Pale enter the Kingdom of Poland.

In the next reign the area of the Pale was contracted, and Siberia was forbidden to the Jews. The Kahal had degenerated into a fiscal agency of the Government and was formally abolished in 1844, the elders being retained as collectors of taxes and of recruits, since from 1827 on, military service (it lasted twenty-five years) had been demanded of the Jews. Some of the conscripts were mere children, and brutal methods were used to convert them. Nicholas I hoped to solve the Jewish question by forcibly doing away with the complex of peculiarities which set the Jews apart from the body of his subjects. Every measure was taken to wean them from their traditional way of life.

The year that conscription was extended to the Jews

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also witnessed the introduction of the Government's monopoly of the sale of vodka, which was organized on a leasing basis. A group of Israelites enriched themselves in this business. During the reign of Nicholas I wealthy industrialists grew in number. In 1832, for example, ninty-three percent of all the factories in Volyn and thirty-two percent of those in Podolia were owned by Jews. The city population was increasing. But the prosperity of the few could only emphasize the misery of the many.

The liberal reign of Alexander II was bright by contrast with that which preceded and followed it. He abolished juvenile conscription, and encouraged schooling as a means of assimilation. Lay culture was commencing to make inroads on the stronghold of Jewish traditionalism. Beside the Maskilim, who pinned their faith to enlightenment, but who were nationalistically minded, there came into being a small group of intellectuals who supported wholeheartedly the Government's program of assimilation.

The beginning of the industrial era, in the second part of the century, furthered by the emancipation of the serfs, changed the circumstances of the Jews. They began to gravitate to the larger cities. As a result, the artisan class greatly increased and a wage-earning class came into being. Jewish capital being required for banking operations and railroad enterprises, the wealthier element among the Jews found favor in the Government's eyes and privileges were extended to it. But it was not long before the non-Jewish capitalist class, which was rapidly accumulating wealth, cried out against Jewish control of commerce and industry, and reaction followed, reaching its climax in the reign of Alexander III.

He believed that the Jews were at the bottom of

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the revolutionary movement which had resulted in the assassination of his father. This was one of the reasons for the strongly anti-Jewish policy of the two last Russian emperors. The years 1881 and 1882 were marked by a series of pogroms, probably engineered by the Government and certainly connived at. Thousands left the country, most of them emigrating to America. In 1882 the Government added a new set of regulations to the complicated network of often contradictory laws already in force. These so-called "Temporary Rules" which, with various emendations, endured until the end of the empire, confirmed the measures which confined the Jews to the towns. As time went on, these Rules were so interpreted as to work the greatest hardships on the Jews who lived in the villages. At the same time tens of thousands were expelled from the large cities. Reversing its previous policy, the Government established a percentage quota which drastically limited the number of Jewish children admitted to the Government schools and universities. From the meanest artisan to the most competent professional man, every Jew was made to realize that the hand of the Government was against him, that he was considered an undesirable, a parasite, an outcast.

Under Nicholas II the Government continued to act on Pobedonostzev's theory that the unwanted race could be disposed of by forcing one third to emigrate, starving another, and converting the last third. Disabilities increased and multiplied on ever hand. With the growth of the revolutionary movement, the Government found it convenient to use the Jews as a scape-goat for its own sins. By setting the Christians against the Jews two purposes were achieved: the rousing of national enmities diverted attention from the real causes of the misery of the masses, and also provided a safety-valve

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for their seething discontent; moreover, the blood-letting would, it was hoped, cool off the revolutionary ardor of the Jews. During the Russo-Japanese War they died for a country in which they were not permitted to live decently, and the constitution of 1905 was handed to the Russian people "wrapped up in pogroms." The quasi-parliamentary regime betrayed the hopes of Jewish emancipation, and indeed the third Duma legislated against the Jews. A ritual murder trial—the famous Beilis case—which closed the year before the war, put the finishing touch to the dark picture.

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CHAPTER III

ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

ONE must imagine Russian Jewry just before the great conflict as placed in a position which was in some respects unique. A people numbering some seven million[1] and scattered in such a fashion as to be everywhere in the minority, it was stamped with the psychology of the alien. This was due to the fact that among all the stepchildren of the empire the Jews were singled out for insult and injury. The statutes placed this people of an ancient culture together with a number of semi-savage tribes: Samoyeds, Kalmucks, and various nomads of Siberia and Central Asia, in the category of "*inorodtzy*": people of alien blood. But while the other inorodtzy enjoyed all the usual rights, the Jew was hedged about with disabilities and proscriptions.

As long as he lived he kept running his head against numberless discriminatory laws. They were so complicated and contradictory that often one was in doubt as to what was permitted and what was not,—a situation of which the bureaucracy was not slow to take advantage. With rare exceptions, Jews were barred from Government service, which meant that they could not find employment in a postal or telegraph office or on the railways, since these were owned and operated by the State. Nor could Jews teach in Government schools or obtain army commissions. They furnished a relatively larger quota of recruits than the rest of the population, yet quarantine, frontier, navy and gendarmerie

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duty were forbidden to Jewish privates, and while a Jewish boy might play in a military band, he could never hope to lead one, just as a Jew could serve on a jury, but not act as foreman. Obstacles were placed in the way of those who wished to practise law. The *numerus clausus* was a favorite device. The number of Jewish army doctors and nurses was limited to five percent, that of Jewish aldermen to ten percent, while the number of students of Jewish faith in the secondary schools and colleges was restricted to ten percent within the Pale of Settlement, to five percent, elsewhere, except in the two capitals, where it was three percent. Certain educational establishments were entirely barred to them. The very number of prayer-houses and synagogues was limited by law, and a special license from the Minister of the Interior was necessary in order to found a house of worship outside of the Pale. It has been aptly said that the Jews spent their lives getting permission to do what the rest of the population did as a matter of course, and that the whole race was practically in the position of criminals under police surveillance.[2] Only the general laxity and venality of the officials made life endurable.

The residential disability, the gravest of all the discriminatory measures and one unknown to any other ethnic group in the empire, was still in force. The majority of the race was confined to the Pale, or, more precisely, to the towns and townlets within its borders, although even within the Pale some cities were open only to privileged groups or were entirely barred. The area to which the bulk of Jewry was restricted contained, in addition to the ten provinces of the so-called Kingdom of Poland, fifteen western and southern Governments, most of which were eventually included in the Soviet Union as part of the White Russian and

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Ukrainian Republics. In the northwest were the provinces of Wilno, Kovno, Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk and Moghilev; in the southwest: Volhynia, Podolia, Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava; and in the south: Bessarabia, Kherson, Ekaterinoslav and Tauris. At the end of the century this territory, which constituted only four percent of the area of the empire, housed nearly ninety-four percent of Russian Jewry.[3] The rest of the country was either completely closed to it, as, for example, Finland and Siberia, or else open for settlement only to certain privileged classes, to wit: merchants of the first guild, persons with academic degrees, physicians, veterans, artisans registered with trade corporations. In many cases this privilege was set at nought because of the difficulties connected with the exercise of it. One could leave the Pale temporarily to appear before a court of justice or, if one were a merchant, for business purposes, but during such absence one was forbidden to halt at any station that was not urban, and one could only buy and not sell merchandise. A Jew traveling outside the Pale was constantly in danger of having his leave abruptly revoked by any petty official.

With the residential disability went one affecting property rights. As a matter of principle, a Jew was permitted to acquire, hold under mortgage or lease real estate only where he was allowed to live permanently. Nevertheless, some of the classes permitted to live outside the Pale were denied this right under some specious pretext. It may be noted that all these draconic measures were directed not against the Jews as a race, but against their religion, and were therefore a denial of the freedom of conscience proclaimed in the imperial code of laws.[4] Baptism according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox faith or, by special permission, conversion to Protestantism, automatically conferred upon the convert all

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the rights enjoyed by the generality of the Czar's subjects.

At the turn of the century four out of every five Jews were townsmen,[5] and since then the process of crowding into urban centers had gone further. Only an inconsiderable fraction gained a living from the soil. The social and economic differentiation had made considerable headway. There was a moneyed middle-class, which derived its relative opulence from banking, commerce, and manufacturing. The Jewish industrialists, usually having limited capital and harassed by a sense of insecurity, generally engaged in enterprises that needed a small investment and had a quick turnover. In spite of the difficulties of obtaining a higher education, the Jews were strongly represented in the liberal professions. In fact, there were seven times as many Jews as non-Jews in that field.[6] There was a wage-earning class (estimated at some 400,000 at the end of the century),[7] chiefly in the larger cities: artisans' helpers and workers in small shops, rather than factory hands. The easily exploited peasant labor was everywhere preferred to the more exacting Jewish workers, even by their own co-religionists. Working conditions had only recently ceased to be those of the sweatshop, and the average wage was not much higher than what it had been around 1900: twenty rubles a month.[8] Mines, foundries, and heavy industry generally, were closed to Jewish toilers. The new towns which grew up as the result of the industrialization of Russia nominally retained the status of villages, and so were closed to the Jews. Thus, the rich Donetz region, with its mining towns of recent growth, remained inaccessible to them.

In the main, the Jews were a people of artisans and small traders. Toward the close of the nineteenth century they made up thirty-two percent of those en-

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gaged in industry within the Pale, and seventy-seven percent of the traders, although they were only twelve percent of those gainfully employed there.[9] Practically every tailor and every shoemaker within the Pale was a Jew. Many were tanners and carpenters, hatters and weavers. Those who knew no trade, and they were legion, kept shop. Restrained from seeking either a less crowded place in which to live or a less unprofitable livelihood, the artisans and shopkeepers were forced, willy-nilly, to take the bread from one another's mouths. Appalling poverty prevailed. The year 1910 ushered in an era of prosperity which followed a period of depression, but the Jews failed to profit by it because it coincided with a wave of extreme official anti-Semitism. Emigration continued to be the sole way of escape from the overcrowded Pale. Between 1881 and 1910 a total of 1,119,059 Jews emigrated from Russia to the United States,[10] and in the year ending June 30, 1914, over 100,000 made the venture.[11]

Emigration, beside drawing off the surplus population, broadened the outlook of those who remained at home, and helped to break down the set, old-fashioned ways. Orthodoxy showed signs of waning, particularly in the larger centers. The civilizing influences of a great city were hostile to the confining religious discipline and to a spirit of inbred exclusiveness. Life was taking on a more secular tone. Time was when the study of the Scriptures was held to be the whole duty of man. The growing poverty and the raised standard of living were drawing father and sons to more practical pursuits and bringing about a more receptive attitude toward lay education, although the respect for book-learning persisted. There was a general relaxation of the religious regimen and an easing up of the regulations concerning diet, marriage, divorce. Old customs were becoming

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matters of reminiscence. The faithful flocked in lesser numbers to the reception rooms of the Hasidic holy men. The beadle no longer knocked on the shutters at dawn summoning all to the service of their Creator.

Yet a considerable proportion of the people continued to hold to their traditions and keep the old observances in all strictness. In the forlorn townlets (known as *mestechki* in Russia and as *posady* in Poland) the Jews lived as their grandfathers had done. The townlet, a semi-urban settlement with no Government offices, was a market center not unlike an American village. The mestechko Jews in the Jewish scheme of things corresponded to the peasantry in the Russian scheme, except that they earned their bread not by tilling the soil, but by keeping shops in which the local farmers could buy what they needed, and by manufacturing goods on a small scale. Accordingly, the center of the townlet was the large cobbled market-place where every Friday and Tuesday the peasants would come to buy boots and cloth, kerosene, sugar, and nails, and where, at much rarer intervals, a fair would be held. The spiritual node of the community was the synagogue, at once a house of prayer, a place of study, and a meeting hall. On Friday afternoons people would also come together at the public bath, with its *mikvah*, the pool for ritual bathing. Life followed the pattern laid down by the rabbis of old, and the seasons in their course brought the feasts and the fasts with the same inescapable regularity with which they brought to the crooked unpaved streets the sunshine of spring, the primordial mud of autumn, the deep snows of winter.

The atmosphere in the larger towns and cities was less patriarchal, and worldly interests played a larger part. Here more children attended the Government schools and the Jewish secular schools with Russian as

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the language of instruction. Yet the indigenous religious school, the dingy, dismal *cheder*, presided over by that sorry pedagogue, the *melamed*, still held its own, and so did the *yeshiva* (advanced religious school). How far the masses were from assimilation may be gauged by the fact that in 1915 and 1916, when hundreds of thousands of refugees passed under the observation of the Jewish Relief Committee, it was found that only half of the Jews could speak the official tongue of the country in which they lived.[12] The true language of the masses was what it had been for centuries. The further findings of the Committee were that eighty percent of the men and sixty-three percent of the women could read, while fifty-seven could both read and write Yiddish. This South German dialect inlaid with Hebrew, the immigrants from Germany had carried with them in the late Middle Ages to Poland, where it absorbed some Slav elements: Polish, Ukrainian and White Russian. An uncultivated vernacular, lacking in refinement and discipline, it has unusual potentialities, since it can call upon the resources of its tributaries: the solid intellectuality of German, the spirituality of Hebrew, the expressiveness of the Slav tongues.

The educational needs of the masses were met in part by the Jewish communal organizations. The law considered all persons of Jewish faith within a given locality as constituting a separate body with fairly well defined functions. These communities or *kehillahs*, through their representatives, were also called upon to look after their own religious welfare, as well as the charity institutions: hospitals, orphanages and homes for the aged. The moneys at their disposal for these purposes the kehillahs derived from an indirect tax levied on *kosher**

* Permitted by or fulfilling the requirements of the law, said usually of food.

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meat, the so-called "basket collection" which was the sole survivor of several special taxes which had formerly been paid by the Jewish population. The collectors of this tax, who were the assessors as well, were elected nominally by the tax-payers, but in reality by the well-to-do. The "basket collection" was considered a State tax, and was put in the hands of the local administration, the kehillah delegates merely acting as advisors when it came to the distribution of the funds, and the prerogatives of the communities were often usurped by the municipal boards. It should further be noted that the rabbis were elected not by the entire community, but only by representatives of the pew-holders in the individual prayer-houses. Generally speaking, the kehillahs were run by the clerics and the rich. The communities were assisted by such private organizations as the Society for the Promotion of Trade and Agriculture among the Jews in Russia (known by the abbreviated name of Ort), which was founded in 1880, the Society for the Spread of Education, the Society for the Promotion of Health among the Jews, and the international Jewish Colonization Association.

Though the air that the Russian Jews breathed was oppressive, it was threaded with vitalizing currents. Persecution, in the more obtrusive forms inaugurated by Alexander III, heightened the feeling of group solidarity and assisted the birth of a new nationalism. With the rise of Zionism at the end of the century, the Palestinian movement, which had been simmering in the ghettos of Russia since the eighties, received a powerful impetus. Before long it became a cultural force of considerable magnitude. Since the movement had the backing of the rabbinate, and since it leaned politically and socially to the right, Zionism came to be identified with pietism, moderate liberalism, and the aspirations of the middle

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class. In 1906 the Russian Zionists decided to supplement work for the restoration of Israel in Palestine with a struggle for national rights in the Dispersion, and the following year the Senate declared the party illegal. But this did not put a quietus on its activities.

Zionism was a spiritual mode of escape from bitter Russian realities, just as emigration to the "golden land of Columbus" was the same thing on the practical plane. Besides the ideal of an exodus to the historic homeland, there was the dream of a revolution which would overthrow the autocracy and usher in a new social order. There were Jews among the pioneers of the revolutionary cause in Russia, and already in the seventies one finds little groups of Jewish socialists in the larger cities of the Pale,—Wilno, Minsk, Białostok, Warsaw, Vitebsk. As early as 1877 the first Jewish socialist paper made its appearance. A dozen years pass, and a labor movement, affecting chiefly artisans' helpers and workers in small shops, enters upon the scene. There are strikes and anti-Government demonstrations. Henceforth, propaganda, which had been going on in Russian, is carried on in the language of the common people, Yiddish, and the seed falls on peculiarly fertile soil. Indeed, the Jews were the first to set up a revolutionary social-democratic organization on a national scale. In 1897, the year of the first International Zionist Congress, a dozen people, representing the scattered groups of propagandists and the underground trade unions, came together secretly in a room at Wilno and founded the General Jewish Workers' Union (*Bund*) of Russia, Poland and Lithuania, commonly styled the Bund.

The following year this group took its place in the ranks of the newly-founded Russian Social-Democratic Party, but throughout its existence it jealously preserved its distinct ideology and organization, claiming

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to be the sole spokesman of the Jewish working-class. By 1903 the differences between it and the Party were so large that they could not be composed, and the Bund seceded, not to return till three years later. By that time it had 274 locals, with 34,000 members.[13] The Bund's opponents in the radical camp accused it, not without foundation, of a separatist and nationalistic bias, and denounced it as erring from the straight Marxian path. Obviously preaching for their own saint, the theorists of the Bund insisted that a nation need have neither a common territory nor political unity, but can be based solely upon a community of language and culture. Furthermore, in 1905 the Bund included in its platform the "national-cultural autonomy" plank, which also figured among the desiderata of the Jewish liberals. The Bundists demanded that the future Russian State which should issue from the revolution, should confine itself to economic and political affairs, leaving all cultural matters, such as education, in the control of the individual nationalities within the commonwealth. At the time of the revolution of 1905 the Bund's tactics were in line with those of the extreme (Bolshevik) faction of the Social-Democratic Party, but after the failure of the uprising it went over to the moderate (Menshevik) camp and remained there. The Bund exercised a far-reaching influence upon the masses, a secularizing, modernizing, but not denationalizing influence.

There were also several minor groups which occupied an intermediate position between the Zionist Party and the Bund: the *Poale-Zion* (Workers of Zion), the *Zeire-Zion* (Youth of Zion), the Zionist Socialists, the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party,—the two latter bodies eventually combining to form the United Jewish Socialist Party. Each offered its own solution of the Jewish prob-

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lem. The air was full of the winds of doctrine and the thunders of polemics. It must be added that the less race-conscious worked for the cause of the revolution under the auspices of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, the Party of the Socialist-Revolutionists, and even in the ranks of the national socialist parties of Poland and the Ukraine.

The freshly stimulated national consciousness found an outlet in other directions than the political one. A Hebraic movement flourished, largely under the aegis of Zionism, and the cause of the vernacular was wholeheartedly embraced by the radicals. During the quarter of a century that preceded the war both languages, and, to a lesser extent, Russian, were the medium of an intense cultural activity. Journals, purveying some news but more opinion, thrived and multiplied. Historical scholarship was amply bearing fruit in the shape of substantial works, mostly in Russia, but animated by the concept of Jewry as a peculiarly constituted nation.

Unlike the Irish renascence, the Jewish revival owed little to the theatre. For centuries there had existed a folk drama in the shape of crude dramatizations, in the spoken language, of the Book of Esther, the story of the sacrifice of Isaac and other Biblical subjects. They were put on by the Yeshiva students and apprentices generally on the day of *Purim**, whence the term *Purimspiel*. In the second half of the nineteenth century sporadic attempts were made to offer the public theatrical entertainment of the modern secular variety, and toward the end of the seventies a regular Yiddish theatre was set up at Odessa. The movement received a serious check when in 1883 the authorities forbade the staging

* The Jewish feast celebrated annually in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from the plot of Haman to exterminate them, as recorded in the Book of Esther.

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of plays in Yiddish, throwing out of work some two hundred actors.[14] The prohibition remained on the statute books as long as the regime lasted, and on occasion the police enforced it, so that the status of the Jewish stage was at best semi-legal. Sometimes, a simple stratagem was resorted to: the affiche announced a German play, which turned out to be a production in the illicit language. The efforts, made several years before the war, to substitute better drama for the low comedy and the lacrimose melodrama indigenous to the Yiddish stage were on the whole unsuccessful.[15]

Imaginative writing, on the contrary, exhibited a fine vitality. The three or four decades preceding the revolution were filled with the labors of a confraternity of novelists, poets, playwrights and essayists, such as would grace any minor literature. Some of them worked in the medium of the traditional language, others in the plebeian tongue, others again were bilingual, using both Hebrew and Yiddish. It is curious to note that no creditable work was done in the language of the half assimilated intellectuals—Russian. A not inconsiderable body of neo-Hebrew and Yiddish writing was thus produced. For many years the chief literary use of the vernacular had been in prayer-books for women who knew no Hebrew. The adaptation of a German book on the discovery of America, published in Wilno in 1824, was probably the first non-religious work of a serious character to appear in Yiddish. For the true beginnings of Yiddish literature, however, one must look to a quaint, racy narrative published half a century later: *The Nag*, by Abramovich, who, under the pseudonym of Mendele Mocher-Sforim (Mendele the Bookseller), is reverenced wherever his language is spoken as the *zeide* (grandfather) of Jewish letters. Among the many who came after him the men of largest calibre

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were perhaps Peretz and that rare, humorous spirit, Sholom Aleichem. In the writings of these men and their successors are distilled the essences of Jewish life: its miseries and limitations, but also its coherence and wholeness, its religious tone, so inseparable from the healthy national instinct of the people.[16]

In addition to the people whose story has been briefly recited in the preceding pages, the empire held several minor ethnic groups professing the Judaic faith. Aside from religion, these, mostly backward Orientals, had nothing in common with Russian-Polish Jewry, and their ways scarcely ever met. There were (in 1897) about 14,000 Karaites (Qaraites) in the Crimea and in Lithuania.[17] This sect always held itself apart from the rest of the Jews,—an attitude which was easy to maintain because they enjoyed full rights. On one occasion their spokesmen claimed that they should not be accounted responsible for the crucifixion, since their ancestors were already established in the Crimea when it took place. The orthodox *Krimchaki*, probably descended from the Khazars, were another privileged group of indigenous Crimean Jews. In language and physical appearance they differed little from the local Tatars.[18] At Derbent, and in the villages of eastern Caucasus there were, in 1897, some 25,000[19] autochthonous Jews (so-called mountain Jews), farmers and artisans, speaking a curious mixed dialect (Judeo-Tat), and believing themselves to be the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Then, too, in Transcaucasia there were some 20,000 Jews, whose language was Georgian and who were almost wholly assimilated to the local population.[20] According to the census of 1897 an equal number were then living in Bokhara, in Central Asia, merchants and silk-weavers, who also

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traced their ancestry back to the lost tribes and who spoke a Persian dialect with an admixture of East-Turkic words.[21] In their native regions neither the Central Asiatic nor the Caucasian Jews suffered from any disabilities. The subsequent career of these peoples is outside the limits of this study. Suffice it to say that the Soviet Government is trying to improve the condition of the Caucasian Jews, ruined by the civil war, and that the revolution seems to have failed to affect the Bokharan Jews.

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CHAPTER IV

FIRE AND SWORD

PROBABLY no other section of the vast mass of humanity involved in the World War went through more trying experiences than the Russian Jews. Practically the whole of the Pale found itself within the zone of military operations or in the immediate rear. If the sufferings of these defenseless people was not more intense than that of the Belgians, it was endured under more distressing conditions, for they were deprived of the moral support and, to a large degree, of the material assistance that came to the little western nation from the outside world. Fighting on the eastern front, where warfare was more brutal than elsewhere, meant unspeakable misery for the non-combatants, particularly the Jews. To the havoc of war was added the suffering that resulted from the enmity of the military authorities, the civil government, and the local population.

During the first days of the hostilities official circles and the press made a weak attempt to fraternize with the outlawed race, and the Jews responded with declarations of loyalty and voluntary enlistment. But the friendly gestures soon ceased. It became apparent that the bureaucracy meant to maintain all the old restrictive measures, and indeed, these were increased with the outbreak of the war. A discharged veteran would be deported back to the Pale. A mother could not visit her wounded son in a hospital outside of the Pale. And all this while 300,000 [1] Jews were serving under the

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Russian colors. As a matter of fact, the Jewish population furnished a proportionately larger number of soldiers than did the non-Jewish in war-time, as it had in peace-time, and as it does today. The military authorities vied with the civil government in treating the Jew as a disloyal and dangerous element, an inner enemy. The race, both in Russia and across the border, was branded as a set of spies, cowards, and deserters, and there were circulated fantastic stories of how they were helping the Germans, as, for instance, by tying gold under the wings of westward-flying geese. Rumors of Jewish disloyalty were displayed by the anti-Jewish press and given weight by being credited in military orders. Yiddish was proscribed as an enemy language, and Jewish papers were squashed. A juvenile magazine and a book of devotion were among the casualties of censorship.

The Jews were singled out by the demoralized soldiery for attacks which often assumed the dimensions of military pogroms. One hundred and fifty such outbreaks are known to have taken place in Poland alone prior to 1915.[2] Prominent Jews were taken as hostages in order to insure the good behavior of the communities to which they belonged. These hostages were not uncommonly treated as spies, and kept in jail, or executed on false charges. Occasionally the taking of hostages was a substitute for deportation. On August 23, 1915, the Commander-in-Chief issued an order in which the phrase occurred: "In view of the fact that the majority of Jews are suspect of participation in espionage . . ."[3] The department of Police went still further, sending out a secret circular on January 9, 1916, blaming the Jews for all the ills that befell Russia in consequence of the war.[4] The press, particularly army journals, worked to inflame public opinion against the race by

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charging that the Jews withdrew money from circulation, that they raised the price of necessaries, that they were speculators. The last charge was not without foundation. The military censor concealed or rendered unrecognizable the names of Jews in lists of soldiers cited for bravery, and even the names of such Jewish soldiers in the French army were treated in like fashion. While mutilating news favorable to the Jews, the censor passed an article warning the people that in view of the approach of Passover* (1916), they should protect their children,—the allusion being, of course, to ritual murder. The voices of those few liberals who tried to defend the unhappy race, notably by the publication, under Gorky's editorship, of miscellany suggestively entitled *The Shield*,[5] were drowned out by the clamor of the Jew-baiters.

Hundreds of towns were evacuated at short notice, at first for strategic reasons, later because of wholesale accusations of espionage. Nearly half a million Jews, in all, were forced to leave their homes. In the spring of 1915, 200,000 were expelled from Lithuania, Livonia and Courland, sometimes upon twelve and twenty-four hours' notice.[6] It must be said, however, that in Lithuania, as long as the Russian authorities remained there, the abandoned property of the deported Jews was relatively safe, but much of it was looted by the local non-Jewish population after the Russians withdrew and before the Germans arrived. In some localities the population was told to hold itself ready to move at any moment. When the administration was ordered to deport "suspicious characters," it got rid of Jews. In one town the Jewish inhabitants were informed at eleven o'clock at night that anyone found there at daybreak

* A Jewish feast in commemoration of the night when the Lord, smiting the first-born of the Egyptians, "passed over" the houses of the children of Israel.

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would be hanged. The Jews of Botki had to leave the place at half an hour's notice.[7] Forty thousand were deported from the province of Mitau alone within six days.

Evacuation was conducted in a brutal fashion by the military, and was accompanied by the loss of some life and much property. The Jewish shops would be looted, and sometimes industrial plants destroyed. Occasionally a town would be razed. In this way many Jewish communities were wiped out. Thousands of men, women and children were dumped, with their few portable belongings, into box cars, denied the aid of co-religionists who would have helped them, and shifted from one railway station to another, until they were finally unloaded upon a town where they were treated as traitors and criminals, and where unemployment and starvation awaited them. In other cases they dragged themselves from town to town on foot, in rags, hungry, sick, friendless and hopeless, perhaps fortunate when—as sometimes happened—they got within range of the guns. By the end of 1915 the German advance practically halted, and the deportations ceased, but the military authorities were taking more men than ever as hostages from the Jewish communities.

A report made by a relief worker in 1920 describes the experiences, in no way exceptional, of the population of the Jewish town of Smorgon. "This was a very prosperous city, with a population of twenty thousand, three-fourths Jewish. It was an industrial town, with banks, shops, theatres, synagogues, churches, hospitals, large warehouses, breweries and tanneries. When the Germans advanced in 1915, the civilian population was given twenty-four hours by the Russians to evacuate the town. The day after Rosh Hashonah*, the greater

* The Jewish New Year.

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part of the inhabitants set out on foot. A small number of the Jews evaded the evacuation edict, remained in their homes, and were caught and burned to death in the conflagration resulting from the fire set by the Russians before leaving the city, and the subsequent bombardment. For seven years the Smorgon Jews were exiles from their homes, living under circumstances of the greatest misery. A week after leaving Smorgon, just before Yom Kippur,* the majority of them arrived in Minsk, where they were herded together in the synagogues, Talmud Torahs and other communal buildings. Many of them remained in Minsk for more than four years, living in the utmost misery and filth, absolute beggars. Naturally their numbers were diminished by disease and starvation during this period. The American Joint Distributing Committee representative met four hundred survivors still in Minsk in the year 1920, and among them some of the richest people of the city, now miserable, dejected, and in rags. Thousands of them, however, had been scattered throughout the length and breadth of Russia as exiles, many living as refugees in barracks. When the Polish-Russian peace was signed at Riga in the Fall of 1920, the Smorgon Jews obtained permission to return to their home town. The JDC representative then visited what was left of the city. He found it a wilderness, trenches lining the Jewish cemetery, and scattered all through the town, the returned refugees living in dug-outs. No buildings at all were left, only a few ruins, among which were those of the synagogues and the schools. By this time a small number of families had returned, and in a feeble sort of a way were attempting to rehabilitate the city. . . ." [8]

At first the residential disabilities remained in force,

* The day of atonement in the Jewish Church.

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so that the refugees were herded immediately behind the war area, and became a charge on the larger cities within the Pale. Wilno, Riga, Warsaw, Kovno, were glutted with them. In Minsk alone, as late as January 31, 1916, there remained 40,000 refugees who were existing on the bread of charity.[9] As the population of these cities was itself in a bad way, the influx of helpless newcomers put a severe strain on limited resources. The towns in the rear profited little by the temporary industrial boom precipitated by the conflict. Competition in the crowded centers was slightly reduced by the drafts, which thinned out the male population, and there was an increased demand for tailors, shoemakers, leather workers, and the like, but this relief was of short duration. It was chiefly the cities of the interior that knew a brief spell of economic activity. And here there were no Jews. They were generally not employed in factories working on Government orders. True, artisans had the right to live anywhere, but in order to settle outside of the Pale, an artisan had to submit a certificate issued by the local Board of Craftsmen, and nearly all such boards in the Pale had been done away with.

The Jews suffered not only in life and limb, but the work that had all these years sustained them in some fashion was taken away from them, and their physical and material well-being, such as it was, was seriously injured. The destruction of Jewish property by bombardment and fire, by requisition and pillage, was appalling. It has been estimated that over 125,000 structures, including industrial plants, belonging to Jews, were destroyed, either wholly or in part.[10] Synagogues and schools were lost to their communities, and ninety-eight percent of the hospitals and eighty-five percent of the communal bath-houses were requisitioned and eventually ruined.[11] Some of the agricultural colonies were razed

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to the ground and the land appropriated by the peasants.

Then, too, there were the indirect effects of the war. Because of the Pale's proximity to the front, the volume of non-military freight carried by the railroads showed a greater decrease there than anywhere else, thus badly damaging Jewish industry and commerce. The stoppage of the export of grain ruined the Jews of the southwest, and the collapse of the timber business, which depended chiefly on foreign markets, dealt a severe blow to the prosperity of the Jewish northwest. The southern sea-ports and western border towns lay paralyzed, the inhabitants facing starvation, with no chance to emigrate and no money from relatives abroad. As an urban group, the Jews were bound to suffer more from the ravages of war than the rest of the population, whose wealth was chiefly in the indestructible form of land, and who, being engaged in agriculture, were economically more or less self-sufficient.

Irresistibly, the driven folk pushed their way gradually toward the forbidden ground beyond the Pale. In time the central Government yielded to the pressure. The natives of the interior were not all unfriendly to the newcomers, and in spite of the hostility of local administrative bodies, the flow of Jews into territory new to them continued and increased. Military necessity was bombarding the walls of the Pale. In August, 1915, a great section of those walls fell: the Minister of the Interior ordered that the Jews be allowed to settle in all the cities of the empire, except only the two capitals and places under the control of the Ministries of the Imperial Court and of War.[12] This was not a law, but a ministerial circular of provisional character, and, although it was not completely carried out, it had its effect. Hundreds of thousands of people whose horizon had been bounded, like that of their fathers and

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grandfathers, by the roofs of their humble native towns, found themselves in distant cities, among utter strangers, trying to recreate somehow their broken habit patterns. There were Jews as far away from the places of their origin as eastern Siberia and the maritime province on the Pacific coast. To those traveling away from the Pale were added also 100,000 Jews whom the Russians had deported from their homes in Galicia and Bukovina.[13]

In September, 1916, the refugees were distributed in this way: thirty-one percent in the war zone, an equal number in the southern provinces, sixteen percent in the central Russian provinces and as many in the Volga region, with the remaining six percent in the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia. At the end of that year the western and southern provinces held more than 200,000 refugees who were living on doles. Some drifted back to their old homes, but the unoccupied section of what had been the Pale offered them no employment.[14]

The Jews in the zone of the German occupation were in one respect less badly off than their co-religionists on the other side of the trenches. The Germans did not enforce the old Russian discriminatory laws, but granted the Jews equal rights with the rest of the population, and allowed the cultural and political life of the Jewish communities to go on freely. Materially, however, the condition of the Jews in this region was desperate, although the German authorities were efficient in giving what help they could by preventing speculation in necessaries and by developing consumers' cooperation and loan banks. Emigration to Germany and recourse to agriculture relieved matters to a degree. But the devasted territory gave no foothold to the groping economic life of its inhabitants. They had to depend entirely on the supplies of the region, which had also

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to feed the army of occupation. Moreover, the Jews were city folk, and of necessity felt more acutely than the others the general paralysis of industry, the Government monopoly on trade, and the shortage of food. The Jewish population of Poland was heavily depleted by deportations and casualties, but then there were tens of thousands of refugees. The population of the northwestern provinces was reduced by the same causes to one-half its former size. The children and the aged suffered most. By the time of the Armistice the number of Jews in the German occupied region who lived on charity was 1,500,000.[15] They were even worse off in territory occupied by the Austrians, because there Czarist restrictions were enforced.

The chief agency in mitigating distress was the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Sufferers, known under the abbreviated name of *Yekopo*. Organized in Petrograd at the outbreak of hostilities, it controlled the relief work throughout the country, maintaining local committees to solve problems that could not be handled at headquarters. The Government worked hand in hand with the committee, which ended by becoming a semi-official institution. One of the contributing causes to the trials of the Jewish war sufferers was the fact that Jews were frequently denied membership on official relief committees, even when they contributed generously to the relief work. The Yekopo helped the refugees during the process of evacuation and while they remained in places of temporary sojourn, which were in the nature of concentration camps. It speeded up the business of settling them in the interior, and cared for them en route. Food, clothes, boots, shelter, and medical aid were provided. The society also organized schools for refugee children, and advanced credits to people trying to find an occupation. Acting as an auxiliary organiza-

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tion, the Ort provided the young with technical training, organized shops, and found employment for the destitute. By the end of 1915 there were a quarter of a million Jews receiving help from the Yekopo.[16] The wealthy gave generously and even the poor assessed themselves. In all, thirty-eight million rubles were spent on relief, of which the Government contributed about eighteen million rubles, and the Yekopo through its central and local committees, ten million.[17] The rest came from abroad. Prior to 1920 over four million dollars were disbursed by the American Joint Distribution Committee for the Relief of War Sufferers (JDC), partly through the American Ambassador at Petrograd.[18] The JDC was formed in November, 1914, and the funds which it distributed had been obtained by the three chief Jewish-American collection agencies.

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CHAPTER V

BETWEEN THE HAMMER AND THE ANVIL

WHEN the autocratic regime fell, the crash reverberated in Jewish ears as though all the bells of freedom were ringing. With a stroke of the pen the Provisional Government abolished the whole complicated network of laws directed against the Jews.[1] Suddenly their chains fell off. Disabilities and discriminations were cast on the refuse heap. The old impossible dream was realized. The Jews could straighten their backs, and look to the future without fear. In the flush of rejoicing a project was born to commemorate the event by erecting a resplendent Temple of Emancipation.

As has been noted above, close upon the heels of the revolution came a forceful self-assertion on the part of the various nationalities that the Imperial Government had subjected so long. The Jews, too, started preparations for a democratically elected national convention. The Zionists looked upon it as a stepping-stone toward a World Congress, which would create a permanent body capable of requesting from the Entente a mandate over Palestine. The other elements, particularly the Bund, hoped to use it as a means of carrying out their program of cultural autonomy. Indeed, the Bund expressly stated that it would oppose any other platform. There was a lively election campaign, but when the time came for going to the polls, the Bolshevik revolution broke out, and the project in its larger aspect came to nothing. The Bund's plan of organizing,

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throughout the empire, Jewish communities for the administration of cultural affairs, was carried out only in the south, and there the institution did not last long.

A National Council, made up of representatives of the several Jewish political parties, was attached to the Ministry of National Affairs, created by the Kiev Rada (parliament). As the Ukrainian Government was controlled by moderate socialists, including the Bund, the Zionists were assigned only one-fifth of the available seats, and were so outraged by this unfair representation that they boycotted the council. This Council was to be replaced by a national assembly, elected on the basis of universal suffrage. Under the pressure of the Bund, the Ukrainian Government instituted cultural autonomy for the Jews. The elections of the officials of the Jewish communities thus established resulted, however, in an overwhelming victory for the Zionists and the clerical party. Toward the end of 1918 a Jewish national convention was held in the then independent Ukraine, with the clerical party and the Zionists again in control. Friction within the kehillah (community) councils made it all but impossible for them to be effective, but Jewish autonomy continued to exist for some months, if largely on paper.

In Siberia, too, nearly every Jewish community had a democratically elected board, which looked out for the special needs of the group and was in charge of its welfare work. The city of Irkutsk, with its large and well organized Jewish contingent, was the headquarters of the National Jewish Council, which had been formed by the Ural and West Siberian boards, but was also in touch with the communities throughout the country. Here, too, the nationalist element was all-powerful. The advent of the Bolsheviks put an end

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to these institutions, as it did to practically all non-proletarian organizations everywhere. At the first conference of the Jewish Communist sections and the Jewish commissariats, held in October, 1918, in Moscow, it was decided that the kehillahs, along with other democratically elected organizations, must go.

The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks woke no sympathetic response in the Jewish masses, and that, although one of the first acts of the Soviet Government was a sweeping abolition of all the discriminatory laws. Revolutionists of Jewish extraction played an important and conspicuous part in the events of those historic days, but the socialist party that spoke for the Jewish proletariat was definitely with the Menshevik opposition. Under the Provisional Government, the Bund had revived and begun to flourish, particularly in the smaller towns where the Yiddish-speaking population prevailed. At first it tried to effect a compromise between the Bolsheviks and the Provisional Government, but soon it definitely joined the forces opposing the Bolshevik dictatorship. What the Jewish socialists wanted was a political not a social revolution. Poland and Lithuania, with their industrial population concentrated in the larger cities, were then under military occupation. What with mobilization draining away the men, there were hardly any young Jewish workingmen in the unoccupied portions of the Pale. These facts have been adduced to account for the stand of the Bund.

The masses of traders and handicraft workers could look upon the Communist experiment only with fear. The Bolsheviks offered the land to the peasants and the factories to the workers. The Jews were neither peasants not factory-hands. On the contrary, the nationalization of private enterprises, and particularly the prohibition of free commerce, cut the ground, economically

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speaking, from under the feet of the Jews. That is, where they had any ground to stand on, in the ruins of the old economic system. Of course, like everyone else, they managed in small ways to circumvent the law that made it a crime to buy and sell. It was nothing new for them to try to evade the throttling ordinances instituted by an alien and hostile Government,—had it not always been so? In the townlet of Sirotino (White Russia), for example, there developed a peculiar kind of night-life such as the Jews must have carried on in many of the little towns of the former Pale. There were diminutive tanneries, soap and candle factories, that woke to activity in the night hours. Cattle were slaughtered in secret under the stars. Loaded carts moved over the roads, traders chaffered with peasants, all in the dead of night.[2]

But the difficulties of their economic existence were entirely eclipsed by horrors of a different order. In the civil war precipitated by the November upheaval the Jewish people found themselves in no-man's land. In 1914 their communities had had the misfortune of being situated between the contending armies. Now again fate set them in the path of the conflagration. It raged in the south and in the west. The greater number of Jews were settled in the south and in the west. It hit the cities hardest. The Jews were an overwhelmingly urban population. Perhaps no group suffered more than they in this vicious conflict, in which the warp of the economic fabric, the bonds of social custom, and the very ties of blood were all crossed, tangled, and disrupted. It was the greatest disaster in the history of eastern Jewry, its horrors outstripping even those of the seventeenth century Cossack rising.

Again the Ukraine was the scene of the tragedy. What gave an edge to the conflict between the Bolshevik

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State and the Ukrainian National Government was the fact that the Rada's following was rural and native, while both the wealthier element, which was pro-Russian, and the working-class, which was pro-Bolshevik, was an urban population made up of non-Ukrainians: Russians, Poles and Jews. (It is noteworthy that the Jewish socialists, as represented by the Bund, worked with the Rada against the Bolsheviks.) When, however, the Rada embraced a separatist policy, declaring the country an independent republic, in January, 1918, and negotiating a separate peace with Germany, at the expense of its former mother-country, the Bund balked, and withdrew its representatives from the Ukrainian cabinet. This act was a count against Jewry in the eyes of the Ukrainian nationalists, at a time when political passions were inflamed by the hatred the villager feels for the townsman, as well as by national antagonisms. The troops of the young republic speedily met with reverses, the Red Army occupied Kiev, its capital, and the sinister rumor was circulated that the retreating Ukrainians were shot in the back by the Jews.

The peasantry made a brief and disagreeable acquaintance with the Soviet Government. Before long, the commander of the Rada troops, Simon Petlura, mounted on a white horse, re-entered Kiev, but he had been able to oust the Bolsheviks only by having recourse to the help of German bayonets. Feeling rose high against the Jews, who were forthwith made responsible for the coming of the Germans. The Jewish representatives in the Rada faced an atmosphere of extreme hostility, and mob violence was prevented only by the presence of the German troops. The Ukrainian army was a hot-bed of anti-Jewish propaganda, the main accusations being that the race was to blame at once for the incursion of the Germans and for the earlier Bolshevik occupation.

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In the months that followed, events moved with dramatic rapidity. The Teutons got rid of the Government that had summoned them, and set up Hetman Skoropadski, a former Russian general, as head of the State, using his administration as an inadequate fig-leaf to cover the fact that they were the real rulers of the country. The peasant had to surrender his produce, and was given a low fixed price, while manufactured articles were practically unobtainable. The villagers were incensed by the fancy that the Jews had an abundance of factory products, which they were keeping for themselves. Nor did the presence of a common enemy in the shape of the foreigners succeed in uniting the Ukrainian radicals with the Jewish socialists.

Then the revolution broke out in Germany. This was the signal for an insurrection in the Ukraine, and within a few weeks the country was cleared of the Germans and their creature, the Hetman. The Skoropadski regime was succeeded at the end of 1918 by two rival governments: that of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Kiev—a nationalist and moderately socialist Directory, under the leadership of Petlura; and the Ukrainian Soviet Government, at Kharkov. The troops of the National Government failed a second time, and by May, 1919, the Red forces had the upper hand. Again the Soviet tax-collectors appeared in the villages, requisitioning grain and paying for it in worthless paper money. Some of these officials were Jews,—a most distasteful novelty. Did it not look as though the Jews were trying to rule the Christians? The Jews were speculators. The Jews were profiteers. The Jews were Communists. The air was thick with prejudice, suspicion and hatred. And so, as the guerilla warfare against the Red Army continued, the Jewish communities were delivered over to destruction.

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Some anti-Jewish outbreaks in the Ukraine had marked the initial two years of the revolution, first in connection with the demobilization of the army, then as a result of the struggle between the Rada and the Bolsheviks, and finally in the course of the peasant uprising against the Germans. Those were the rumblings of the approaching disaster, the preparation for the terrors of 1919. The flames broke out just before the new year. In the eastern part of Volyn, where the Red Army was forcing the troops of the Directory back, numbers of Jewish towns and villages were turned into shambles. By the end of January the provinces of Kherson, Poltava, and Kiev were ablaze. February brought, among others, the frightful pogrom in Proskurov. The March slaughters followed in the wake of Petlura's advance from the northwest toward Kiev. April saw the conflagration failing slightly, only to flare up fiercely the next month. In June and July, when the terror was at its height, the provinces of Podol and Kiev suffered most. In August a new force, that all through the summer had been battering away at the Soviet troops, took the lead in the Ukrainian drama,—this was the Volunteer Army of General Denikin, Commander-in-Chief of the anti-Bolshevik forces in the south.[3]

The pogroms were the work of the Directory's regulars and, to an even greater extent, of the numerous guerilla bands, which were under its partial control. The difference between the two was slight. Occasionally the local population lent a hand in the looting, since the hope of booty was a strong motive force in these outbreaks. Some of the leaders of the marauding gangs acted on the principle that morality consisted in taking from the Jews to give to the Christians. These bands practically divided the country among themselves. The

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Directory found them a convenient tool, and the Soviet power held, and that intermittently, only the larger towns and the main railway junctions. The Jewish population was at their mercy. Petlura's Government was not above utilizing the anti-Jewish feeling to inflame the masses against the Bolsheviks, and Petlura is said to have declared: "I am sorry for the pogroms, but they help to maintain the discipline of the army." [4] The trial of Petlura's assassin which took place in Paris during the fall of 1927 brought forward a mass of evidence pointing to the general's personal responsibility for the slaughters.

When, by the end of the summer (1919), Denikin's White regime triumphed over the troops of both Petlura and the Bolsheviks, the Jews throughout the south drew a breath of relief. Here, they thought, was a strong Government which would put an end to the bloody chaos, so that they might have a chance to live and earn a livelihood. They were deceived. The turn of events merely tossed them from the frying-pan into the fire. "Wherever the Volunteer Army comes," reads a memorandum presented to the General by a number of Jewish communities, "there occurs a systematic and more or less complete extermination of the Jewish inhabitants." [5] In Kiev alone there was a massacre in October in the course of which five to six hundred Jews died horrible deaths, and hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property was destroyed.[6] The official and semi-official press was busy agitating against the Jews as supporters of the Bolsheviks, thus strengthening the popular notion that the Jew was an Ishmael, and the hand of every man should be raised against him. The troops were violently anti-Jewish, and the Government, although it saw the inconvenience of using the pogroms as a political weapon, refrained from quarreling with

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its own soldiery. As the army's power strengthened, the pogroms grew fiercer, until the survivors believed that this vigorous Government, which had won international recognition, was destined actually to finish the work of extermination begun by the guerilla bands and the troops of the Directory.

Denikin's regime did not last. By dint of a tremendous effort the Red forces rallied and smashed the White front. In December they were back in Kiev. But peace was still far off. With the spring of 1920 came the Russo-Polish War, to put a final touch to Jewish misery. The Polish troops invaded the White Russian provinces, the Ukraine, Lithuania, and even some provinces of Great Russia. In their advance and in their retreat they wreaked havoc on the Jewish communities that had already been trodden underfoot by the peasant bands and by the regulars of Petlura and Denikin. The single bright spot in the situation was that the advance of the Poles placed the Ukraine, hitherto closed to foreign relief agencies, within reach of the Warsaw office of the Joint Distribution Committee. But the Ukrainian communities lost this help when the Poles withdrew in the summer.

In the wake of the Polish soldiery came the forces of Balakhovich, one of the many Russian generals who took the field against the Bolsheviks. His troops overran a wide territory, making their worst inroads on White Russia. Even after a Russo-Polish peace was concluded, they continued to harass White Russia from their base in Poland. These provinces were the prey of savage bandits well into the year 1921. As usual, the Jews were the heaviest sufferers. The pogroms of the Balakhovich forces were exceptionally brutal. The General told a relief worker that he "intended to make the Jews fear his name, so that on hearing of his

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approach they would rush toward the Bolshevik lines and thereby demoralize the armies of the enemy."[7]

The Red Army contained elements that were as undisciplined and as anti-Jewish in feeling as the men who acknowledged the authority either of the Ukrainian People's Republic or of Denikin. Indeed, many of the Ukrainian peasant bands had at one time fought under the Red flag. Small wonder, then, that pogroms were occasionally perpetrated by Soviet regiments. But this happened comparatively seldom and the offenders were severely punished, the anti-Jewish units being sometimes disbanded. Those who preached the class war may have aroused existing national antagonisms, but this was contrary to their intention. The War Commissariat maintained a special section for anti-pogrom propaganda. As a rule, the appearance of a Soviet detachment meant comparative safety for the Jewish population. Since the Whites identified Judaism with Bolshevism, the Reds came to consider anti-Semitism a token of counter-revolution. Naturally, the Jews, whatever their social status, clung to the Bolsheviks as their saviors. On one occasion the entire Jewish population of a town, some four thousand persons in all, trooped after a retiring Bolshevik regiment. Again, a Soviet armored car entering a small town in which a pogrom was going on, carried off all the survivors.[8] A good many Jewish youths, irrespective of their political convictions, sought to enter the Red Army. In 1919 there were entire regiments in Minsk (White Russia) which were almost wholly Jewish. They played a considerable part on the Polish front. Jewish boys under seventeen fought at the front against Denikin.

It was not only the protection afforded Ukrainian Jewry by the Red Army that saved it from total extermination. In many instances a section of the

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Christian population, especially the workingmen, at the peril of their own lives, defended the Jews and hid them from their pursuers. In some cases the peasantry shielded the local Jews but attacked those in distant villages. At the height of the Denikin pogroms there existed in the Ukraine a League for Combating Anti-Semitism, of which leading citizens were members. It was able to save certain Jews falsely accused of giving aid and comfort to the enemy. The moral support afforded by any manifestation of sympathy on the part of outsiders was in itself invaluable to the hounded race.

It was seldom that safety could be purchased for money, but there were instances where this was done. Many communities attempted to arm themselves for self-defense, but naturally such amateur militia was effective merely in romote localities, where only small bands were operating. In the face of a large force they were powerless, especially as they were handicapped by the scarcity of arms. It must be remembered that these pogroms differed radically from those that took place before the revolution. The earlier outbreaks were instances of mob violence, often instigated and always connived at by the Government, and utilized by it for its own ends. In those days the directing hand was concealed, and the dirty work was done by city hooligans. Now they were punitive expeditions, military operations, conducted methodically and in cold blood against a defenseless peaceful population. Among the Jews the revolution failed to produce that violent discord which among other groups set brother against brother and father against son. Whatever class differences existed lost their meaning when the common enemy drew no distinction between rich and poor. The sense of brotherhood which centuries of persecution had

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bred, could not but come to the surface when to be a Jew was a dangerous matter.

In the blackest years of distress no Jewish welfare societies were active in Russia, but in 1920 the situation changed. That year witnessed the formation of the Jewish Public Committee (shortened to *Yevobkom* in Russian and *Yidgezkom* in Yiddish). It did splendid work in helping pogrom victims and refugees, particularly orphaned children. In addition to saving lives, it saved souls, by setting up educational institutions, which in fact later became the basis of the governmental system of Jewish schools. Originally, it was a coalition committee, with a Communist chairman and members representing such various elements as the Bund, the Yekopo, the Ort, and others. Soon, however, the non-Bolshevik elements were eliminated. It was the Yevobkom and the Ort that handled nearly seven and a half million dollars of foreign relief funds. Relief was also administered by foreign organizations through agencies of their own. Between 1920 and 1924 the JDC spent, for relief and reconstruction, upward of nine and a half million dollars in European Russia and another half million in Siberia.[9]

Wherever the civil war raged, the Jews were singled out for persecution by the anti-Soviet forces. In Siberia, where the conflict in 1919 was particularly savage, there were nearly a million Jews, who had drifted there as war refugees or as emigrés from the territory controlled by the Soviets.[10] Many refugees were reduced to half-nomadic hordes, wandering helplessly along the highways, fleeing from the contending armies, and decimated by hunger and disease. The Jews were in worse case than the others because, in addition to the usual hardships, there was always the threat of a

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pogrom. Here, too, the White leaders refused to distinguish between Jews and Bolsheviks, and all the troubles that befell the country were laid at the door of this one people. They were even held responsible for the failure of the American Expeditionary Army in Siberia to assist Admiral Kolchak against the Red Army. Vladivostok was decorated with posters urging the citizenry to kill the Jews, and appeals were made to the Red Guards to throw off the yoke of their Jewish rulers. General Graves, who headed the American Expeditionary Army in Siberia, realized the situation that the Jews were facing, but the American consuls in Vladivostok and Amsk blocked the way to transmitting the news to Washington. To a representative of the JDC Admiral Kolchak said that the anti-Jewish proclamations were addressed to the Red Army as part of the effort to undermine its morale; that he had stopped them; that he knew the number of Jews in the Red Army to be insignificant; that he could cease all anti-Jewish propaganda; but that the only way to check the antagonism against the race was to destroy the Bolsheviks. But only a few days later the admiral appointed a Commander-in-Chief of the Siberian forces whose first official proclamation incited his men against the Jews. During July and August, 1919, the Kolchak front crumbled, and the Jewish population was victimized by retreating troops. After the evacuation of Ekaterinburg by Kolchak's troops on July 12, General Annenkov and his Cossacks entered the city and butchered its Jewish inhabitants.[11]

The tragedy of the Jews, ground between the upper and nether millstones of the civil war, has not as yet been told in full detail. A few dry statistics are available: Between 1917 and 1921 there occurred 1,520 pogroms in 911 places within the territory of the

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Ukraine and White Russia, including the province of Homel.[12] One authority estimates the number of the dead between 90,000 and 100,000.[13] According to another investigator, casualties were exactly twice as great, while 300,000 minors were orphaned and 700,000 people suffered property damages, estimated at many billion rubles.[14] The mortality during those years increased sevenfold.[15] But figures can give no adequate sense of the disaster. A commission for the collecting and publishing of information relating to the pogroms in the Ukraine has been in existence since 1919. It has assembled a vast mass of documentary material, partly inherited from various organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, official and private, White and Red. The collection was safely transported to Berlin, and prepared, in part, for publication. But so far, owing to lack of means, only one volume of the projected series has appeared.[16] There are also two small collections of documents relating to the slaughters of 1919-20, one edited by the well known Russian novelist, Gusev-Orenburgsky, and based upon the data gathered by the Committee for Relief of Pogrom Victims, attached to the Russian Red Cross in Kiev,[17] the other based upon the documents and photographs exhibited in Moscow in 1923 and kept in the archives of the former Jewish section of the Commissariat of Nationalities.[18] The mere reading of these volumes, particularly the latter, which is also in the nature of an album, is an unforgettably painful experience. Their contents would hold a prominent place in that collection of cruelties with which Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky's novel, desired to confront his God.

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CHAPTER VI

RECONSTRUCTION

WITH the year 1921 the period of armed conflict virtually closes, and in spite of the disturbing effect of the famine that followed, recuperative forces come into play. In the world which emerged from the chaos, the Russian Jews found their position radically altered. A fairly homogeneous group of some seven millions, living under one government, was now partitioned among half a dozen separate and mutually hostile states. The newly created frontiers cut across the body of the people, and what with the hostility of the new governments to each other, an already dispersed race found itself more disunited than ever. One section was now within the borders of the new Poland. In 1921 the Jewish population of the Polish Republic was approximately 2,850,000.[1] Much smaller segments became part of the citizenry of Lithuania, Roumania, Latvia, Esthonia and Finland. From now on these fragments of Russian Jewry live, move and have their beings as disconnected, practically independent entities. The chapters that follow will be concerned exclusively with the portion of the Jewish population that remained within the Soviet Union.

Here the Jewish masses are living in the main where they had always lived, in the southern and northwestern provinces. Now these provinces are respectively known as the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, both members of the

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Union. The figures of the census of December, 1926, show the Jewish population of the Ukraine to have been at that date 1,574,000, or five and four-tenths percent of the total population of the republic.[2] As before, the majority lives in the western section of the country, in the provinces situated on the right bank of the Dnieper. Over one-fifth live in the villages, including the 220 townlets that have recently been given the status of rural settlements, though the number of those who make their living by farming is much smaller.[3] The same census places the Jewish population of White Russia at 407,000, or eight and two-tenths percent of the total population of that republic. As in the Ukraine, the Jews here are a predominantly urban element: they form forty percent of the city dwellers and less than one and one-half percent of the rural inhabitants.[4] A detailed description of the republic issued in Minsk in 1927 by its Council of People's Commissars offers a more generous estimate of the Jewish population, as of January 1, 1927: namely, 520,000.[5]

A considerable number of Jewish communities are scattered over the vast territory of the Union lying outside of these two regions. The abolition of the Pale of Settlement has had its effect, and some immigration into the formerly forbidden territory is taking place. Small contingents of Jews have appeared in regions where they were previously unknown. In 1923 there were over 86,000 Jews in Moscow, as against a scant 5,000 in 1897,[6] and in 1925 there were some 70,000 in Leningrad. The Jewish communities of Smolensk and Pskov and the Volga cities: Nizhni-Novgorod, Saratov, Samara, have been growing apace. The census of 1926 gives the Jewish population of the Crimean Republic as about 40,000.[7] Considerable numbers are also to be found in the towns of the Caucasus. The census of

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1920 recorded about 45,000 Jews in Siberia.[8] In December, 1926, the Jewish population of the R. S. F. S. R. was 567,000, and that of the entire Union was 2,601, 000, or one and eight-tenths percent of the total population.[9] Adding the natural increase at the rate of two percent per annum which obtained before the revolution,[10] we get the figure 2,700,000 for the end of 1928. It is worth noting that whereas in the previous census the term Jew denoted a person of Jewish faith, in the latest census the term is used in the sense of a self-designated member of the Jewish ethnic group (the word used in the blanks is "*narodnost*"). The census of 1926 will also yield a wealth of data relating to geographic distribution, occupations, social status, and other aspects of Jewish demography. But there will be no light on the number of persons who profess the Jewish faith, since religion does not figure in the questionnaires.

Within the old boundaries the population has shifted a good deal of recent years. During the pogrom period the few Jewish villagers fled for their lives to the townlets, and the more well-to-do inhabitants of these sought refuge in the larger towns. In the majority of cases the refugees found no occupation and indeed became objects of charity. When public peace was restored, there began a movement in the opposite direction: from the larger to the smaller towns. A number of refugees did not return to their homes, because they had no homes to go to. Thus, of 6,707 Jewish houses that existed before the pogroms in twenty-one townlets of the former province of Kiev, only 1,556 were habitable in 1923, and of these, 363 needed repairs. The remainder had either been destroyed during the riots or, in the absence of the rightful owners, appropriated by the peasantry. The Jewish population of these town-

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lets was reduced from the 66,000 that it was before the pogroms to 21,000 in 1923.[11] Everywhere, starvation and epidemics had dealt more ruthlessly with the Jews than with others, mortality having increased in some places sevenfold.[12] They had no country cousins to fall back upon in the famine years, and it is a notable fact that typhus hit the cities harder than the villages.

The close of the civil war period meant the shutting down of war industries, throwing such Jews as were thus employed out of work. The ranks of the unemployed were also swelled by the abolition of certain Government enterprises and the reduction of Government staffs. On the other hand, the end of the pogrom period coincided with the beginning of the new economic policy. Commerce and industry as private undertakings became lawful once more. The smaller industrial plants that had been nationalized were returned to their former owners. Therewith the Jewish small manufacturers gained a new lease of life. The business man, who had almost lost the habit of dealing in the open, gradually and cautiously crept out from underground. Shutters were taken down from the shops, goods again appeared behind the counters, damaged buildings were repaired and new ones erected. Commodities were scarce, prices high, and in the absence of a stable currency, the chances for speculation excellent. The contact of the townlets with the countryside, which had been destroyed during the civil war, was restored.

If we are to judge by the Ukrainian town of Habno, of which a thorough study was made in 1924, the new economic policy meant in some instances the rapid restoration of small town trade to its pre-war level.[13] This particular town, having had a strong Jewish militia, escaped the worst ravages of the pogroms. The Jewish

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shops in the surrounding villages had, however, been abandoned by their owners during the troubled times, so that now the peasants had to do all their buying in the town. Economic recovery must have been much slower in less favored places. The purchasing power of the peasant, upon which the prosperity of the townlets depended, was not increasing at a sufficiently rapid rate. He was not consuming as much as heretofore, and he had learned to manufacture at home some of the products that he had formerly bought. Merchants and artisans were consequently left high and dry.

The Jews in the large cities were affected no less than their non-Jewish neighbors by the new order. But in many out of the way townlets they were scarcely aware of any fundamental change. They continued, under much harder conditions, to live and work as they had done for generations. The street that had been named for Alexander was now named for Lenin, but the harassed looking men and the shrunken women who inhabited the tumble-down houses were the same. There was little, aside from an occasional confiscation of goods or a period of forced labor at something like road-mending, to make the townsmen realize that they were living under a regime of proletarian dictatorship. But gradually a sense of this was to be borne in upon them.

The semblance of a commercial boom which here and there resulted from the new economic policy was short-lived. The Government again opened fire on private enterprise, but this time it was a flank rather than a frontal attack. By the end of 1923 the taxes imposed on private commercial and industrial establishments became ruinously high. In 1924 a tannery at Habno with an annual turn-over of 6,000 rubles had to pay eight different taxes, to the amount of 160 rubles a

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month.[14] In self-defense the small business men formed mergers. But taxes continued to rise, and these "trusts" went under and gave place to individually owned shops. These are, however, pitifully small affairs, and their owners are playing a losing hand. A typical store in the town of Sirotino (White Russia), the sole support of a family of six, had, on a certain day in 1924, these assets and liabilities: stock worth 80 to 85 rubles; cash on hand, plus money owing to the concern: 30 rubles; debts: 35 rubles. The owners paid rent to the amount of 24 rubles, and various taxes totalling 89 rubles. The shop was a cubby-hole partitioned off from a large empty room, because the tax is calculated proportionately to the area occupied by the establishment assessed.[15] Such is a shop. The turn-over of a stand may be left to the imagination.

What is deadly to the small Jewish trader is not only the Government's taxation policy, but also, and to an even greater extent, the development of consumers' and producers' cooperatives. Even before the war they were taking business away from the private traders. The cooperatives, it must be remembered, although nominally voluntary associations, have in reality a semi-official status, and indeed, are fostered by the Government as a means of fighting the nepman. The appearance of cooperative stores in the villages and the growth of cooperative marketing is depriving the town of its importance as a trading center, and thereby dooming it to extinction.

The external appearance of a place like Habno or Sirotino tells the story of the townlets' downfall. The marketplace, formerly the center toward which everything gravitated, is deserted, and, in summer, where it is unpaved, offers pasturage to the horses and cows, and hospitality to the chickens and pigs. The shops are

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empty, and some of them wear padlocks for their owners' failure to pay taxes. Only the cooperative stores and offices, with their bright new signs decorating wide fronts, do a booming business. The synagogue fence shows gaps like an old man's mouth, the window-panes of the desolate prayer-house are broken, and pigs root among the tumbling stones of the cemetery. The single bath-house (there were two in the old days) is heated every other week instead of every Friday.

The situation of the artisan is relatively better than that of the trader, and has been steadily improving. Russian economic nomenclature distinguishes between the handicraftsman (*remeslennik*), who works to order directly for his customer, and the homeworker (*kustar*), who works on his own, sometimes with hired help, for the general market. In the case of the Jewish artisans, it is often a distinction without a real difference, and the term kustar is now used almost exclusively. They have usually been able to keep their heads above water, and indeed form the aristocracy of the townlet. The proverb: *melocha is melucha* (a trade is a kingdom) was never truer than now. Formerly a merchant looked down upon an artisan. The situation is now reversed. The bootmaker or the harness-maker is fairly sure of his bread, and certainly so if he has peasant customers. Some artisans work in villages all week, coming home for the Sabbath.

A study of three townlets situated in the former provinces of Kiev and Chernigov which was made by an Agro-Joint representative at the end of 1926, established the fact that the artisans, constituting about thirty percent of the population, were economically the strongest element. Tailors and shoemakers were earning about fifty or sixty rubles a month, and occasionally even as much as one hundred or one hundred and fifty

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rubles.[16] An investigation of several Volynian and Podolian townlets with an aggregate population of 4,332, conducted at the same time, revealed a similar situation. The artisans, numbering forty percent of the inhabitants, were best off.[17] Other investigations, of a semi-official nature, undertaken in 1926 at the initiative of the Communist Party, confirm these findings. It appears, moreover, that the mass of artisans is undergoing a process of economic differentiation.

The handicraftsmen at one time sought to keep competition down by limiting the number of apprentices. In the townlet of Parichi (White Russia), for example, the number of apprentices in 1926 was half of what it had been in pre-war days, there being on an average less than one apprentice to each artisan.[18] A more important reason why apprentices are accepted reluctantly is because labor laws are so complicated and difficult to comply with. In places the demand for learners in the trades has increased, and measures have recently been passed which facilitate the employment of hired labor in the kustar industry.

The improvement of the condition of the small producers was partly due to the fact that the Communist Party took them under its wing. The fact is that the State industries are incapable of supplying the country with the goods it requires, and, therefore, as the Communists recognize, for some time to come the artisan is likely to keep his place in the economic scheme. At first he was lumped together with the exploiters of labor, and treated accordingly. Gradually, however, the absurdity of such an identification was borne in upon even the most hidebound Party members, and the artisans began to be regarded by the Bolsheviks as possible allies. The Zionist-Socialists, although an underground organization, claim to have been instrumental in effecting the

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change of heart experienced by the Communists. The attitude toward the craftsman changed for the better particularly after the fourteenth conference of the Communist Party in 1925. At present they are in a class with the peasants, and the theory prevails that, like the rural masses, the artisans will reach socialism by way of cooperation. Kustars having one helper or two apprentices are practically on the same footing with wage-earners. Like the latter, they have the vote, and their own societies (*Kustpromsoyuz*), analogous to trade unions. These organizations are something in the nature of mutual aid societies, offering their members, as they do, legal and medical help, and educational facilities of sorts. They also establish nurseries, clubs, and, in some cases, loan societies. These obtain assistance in the form of credits from the Jewish Colonization Association and, to a larger extent, from State and cooperative banks. Even those who employ as many as three assistants enjoy the benefit of mutual credit societies. The importance of the kustar unions is further enhanced by the fact that they are represented on the taxation commissions,—a happy change from the days when an artisan occasionally had to sell his tools to pay the exorbitant taxes.

The extent to which the condition of the tailors and the tanners, the knitters and the brushmakers, the booters and the hatters, has bettered itself must not, however, be exaggerated. There is still a great deal of unemployment, and what with inferior training and poor equipment, many lose out. Besides, the artisans live in constant dread of Government interference. The interests, real or fancied, of State industry are paramount, and where they require the crushing of the small manufacturer, he is made short shrift of. No less an authority than the vice-president of the Union Plan-

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ning Commission (*Gosplan*) has classed the needle trades with the private industries whose further growth is undesirable, and the leather craft with those which the development of State industry has rendered superfluous.[19] Now both needle work and leather work are traditionally Jewish occupations. In some lines the Jewish small producer working for the market has to compete, on the one hand, with mass production of the factory type in the better grades of goods, and on the other hand with peasants who, in their winter leisure, manufacture articles of poor quality but low price. And as, in addition, the artisan sometimes has against him the forces of the State, his outlook is not bright.

The merchant group in the townlets, and everywhere, for that matter, has in the meantime been steadily losing ground. This holds true particularly of the small fry. They live wretchedly and without hope. In this connection the findings of a commission appointed in 1926 by the Executive Committee of the White Russian Communist Party to investigate the townlet of Parichi, mentioned above, are illuminating. In this townlet, typical not only of White Russia, but also of the Ukraine, the consumers' cooperatives increased their turn-over twofold in a single year. Cooperative stores have been established in all the neighboring villages, so that the peasantry deals with private shopkeepers only out of pity for their destitute families. The commission visited a representative shop, in the nature of a general store, on a Sunday, the only market day, and found one and a half rubles in the cash-box (75 cents gold). In the course of the hour which they spent there, the shopkeeper sold ten kopeks' worth of sunflower seeds. The taxes and the rent that this concern

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is asked to pay amount to 11.02 rubles a month, about as much as the owner's family of three spends for food.[20] The moribund shops often occupy disproportionately large quarters, and the shopkeepers live in their own homes, of a comfortable size, but their standard of living is on a starvation level.

The two studies of the townlets in east and west Ukraine, which have already been drawn upon, reveal like conditions. Taxes are ruinous, especially to the small merchant, who keeps no books, and is therefore subject to arbitrary assessment. The larger shops are going out of business or shrinking, and the small ones are dying by inches. Private stores do business only during the hours when the cooperative shops are closed. And they are able to carry on this illegal practise only because the militia (i. e., the police) are too inefficient to enforce the regulation about closing hours. Only fifteen to twenty percent of the merchants have any capital of their own; the rest work with borrowed money. The hand of the State is ruthless against private traders, and the feeling among them is that they cannot hold out. Grain merchants are virtually denied the right to ship their consignments by rail, so that on occasion they have to resort to the primitive and more expensive method of carting, and besides they may not sell either to the cooperatives or to the State. Their only hope is the local market, which is exceedingly small. Government regulations put so many obstacles in the way of the private textile dealers that their prices are one hundred percent higher than those of the cooperatives.[21] Consider also that as a member of the odious bourgeoisie, the Jewish business man is discriminated against in other ways: he has to pay more for rent, as well as for public utilities; his children are the

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last ones to be admitted to school and are not allowed to join the Red Army, an invidious distinction which carries with it a high exemption tax, and which spirited youths naturally resent.

It hardly needs saying that the restrictions imposed upon private commerce and industry are not directed against any one racial or national group, but are rather a matter of general economic policy. If the Government holds to this course, and there is every reason to expect that it will, the days of the private business man, particularly the merchant, are numbered. What this means to the Jews may be gauged from the fact that in 1924 the traders and small producers constituted three-fourths of the Jewish population.[22] A report submitted to the Conference of Jewish Sections of the White Russian Communist Party in October, 1925, estimated the productive elements among the Jews of the Union, that is, the farmers, wage-earners, employees, artisans and professionals, at some 1,700,000, the remaining million consisting of the nepmen, the new bourgeoisie, living mostly in the cities, the traders, most numerous in the townlets, and the large déclassé and parasitic group having no definite occupation. A year later the productive portion of Soviet Jewry had grown to two million, and the unproductive portion decreased proportionately. These figures, given out by the Jewish Communists,[23] are perhaps too optimistic. Economically, Russian Jewry is undoubtedly ill adjusted to a system based upon large scale State industry, State commerce, and cooperatives. The incontrovertible fact is that the workings of this system tend to deprive a considerable proportion of Jews, particularly in the smaller towns, of their scanty livelihood. At the same time the drastic restriction of immigration to the United States, prac-

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tically closing the country to East European Jewry, blocked the outlet which used to drain off a large portion of the Jewish surplus in Russia. Whereas 102,638 Russian Jews [24] entered the United States in 1914, only some 1,500 entered the country in the year ending June 30, 1926.[25] Under these circumstances, an occupational realignment becomes a matter of life and death.

From the beginning of the revolution the younger and better educated element took advantage of the opportunity to enter the newly opened field of Government service. And as at first the non-Jewish intellectuals generally declined to serve in Soviet offices and the old-time bureaucrats were undesirable, the Jews filled many positions. In 1920, of all the gainfully employed Jews in Odessa, 11.2 percent were Soviet employees.[26] In 1926, 23 percent of all the Soviet employees in the Ukraine were Jews,[27] (although the Jews constitute but six percent of the population). Their number in the civil service is, however, on the decrease, and the field is generally a limited one, demanding as it does rather high qualifications. Moreover, the staffs are being constantly cut down for reasons of economy, and since for the last three or four years there has been a tendency to man the Government, as far as possible, with local men speaking the local language, the Jewish clerks are hard put to it to keep their places.

A field which is more accessible, from the standpoint of the Jewish masses, is that of factory work. The transformation of middlemen and artisans into industrial wage-earners is indeed the heart's desire of the Communists, the proletariat being the standard-bearer of the new order, and industrialization the keystone of the Bolshevik program. Communist leadership has there-

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fore striven from the beginning to further this process, —against great odds. Industry in the Soviet Union is developing slowly, and there is scarcely enough for the old hands to do. Eastern Ukraine, with its mines and factories, was never a Jewish center, and what with residential disabilities, Jews in former days were practically unknown as workers in heavy industry, so that now when an opening presents itself, the place is at once filled by a non-Jew accustomed to the job. Besides, the Jew is likely to retreat from work that throws him into close contact with men not of his own race habits and manners, and the young men who graduate from trade schools sometimes do not stick to factory work, but turn to study for the professions.

Nevertheless, the wage-earning group has been on the increase. It is recruited chiefly from the artisan class. Thousands are employed in the iron works of Nikolayev and Ekaterinoslav, formerly inaccessible to Jews. They also find employment in sugar refineries, on railroads, and even in the mines of the Don basin. At the same time there has been a substantial decrease of the Jewish contingent in the tailor shops and tanneries, which thirty years ago employed half the Jewish industrial workers. The Communists note with satisfaction that the Jews are now mainly employed in State and cooperative enterprises, and also that the increase of manual workers among them outstrips the increase of brain workers. In two years the Jewish wage-earners increased by 100,000, so that at the end of 1926 they numbered 400,000, making, with their dependents, a proletariat of 1,000,000. These probably swollen figures were given out at the All-Union Conference of the Jewish Sections of the Party, which took place December, 1926.[28] The growth of unionized labor among the

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Jews has, however, been slower than among the rest of the population.

Another way out of the impasse in which Russian Jewry finds itself is agriculture. It is a rough and unfamiliar road, but people are driven by hard necessity to take it. Men and women are leaving the dying townlets and the cities haunted by unemployment, and are determinedly turning their faces to the land.

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CHAPTER VII

THE JEWISH FARMER

THERE have been Jewish farmers in Russia for a hundred and twenty years. Their settlements came into being thanks to the initiative of a paternalistic government which wanted to wean the Jews from their customary occupations and set them to tilling the soil. In the Russia of the early nineteenth century the physiocrats' belief in agriculture as the sole source of true public wealth lingered in the official mind. Moreover, the Government of Alexander I sought at once to thin out the overcrowded Jewish population of the Pale and to add to the peasantry of the recently annexed southern provinces. The Statute of 1804 with one hand deprived some 60,000 families of their former places of residence in the rural districts and of their previous occupations as tavern-keepers, traders and lease-holders, and with the other invited them to become tillers of the soil. The prospective settlers were promised free land, a government loan, and exemption from taxes for ten years, and were assured that they would not be degraded to serfdom. When the evictions from the villages began, many families applied for permission to take up farming, and were forthwith shipped to New Russia, notably the province of Kherson.

In 1807 four colonies were planted on the patch of virgin steppe between the river Inguletz and the Dnieper, into which it flows. Pioneers continued to pour in, and within two years the number of settle-

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ments doubled. Some of the villages were given Hebrew names: *Seidemenukha* (Field of Rest), *Nahartav* (Good River), *Yefenahar* (Fair River). Very soon, however, the stream of immigrants ceased: the 300,000 rubles set aside for loans to the settlers had become exhausted, and besides, the Government suspended deportation from the rural districts. In the year of Napoleon's invasion there was a total of some six hundred families in the colonies. Many more had struck out into the wilderness and hopefully attempted this new mode of life. But not unlike the first colonists in the New World, many died of hunger and disease. Others fled from starvation on the prairie to such livelihood as they could gain in the nearest towns.

Those who remained dragged out a wretched existence. Government help was pitifully inadequate. Land was plentiful, but water was distressingly scarce, and the work was strange, hard, and unrewarding. Brutal and corrupt taskmasters had the whiphand. God, the faint-hearted argued, had set His face against this enterprise: year after year He visited them with bad crops. Yet there was nothing for it but to persist, and within fifty years their numbers were swelled by three successive waves of immigration. White Russia having suffered from a terrible famine in 1821, and the Government having resumed expulsion from the villages, carts loaded with Jewish immigrants again appeared on the roads leading to the land of promise in the south. The administration made things hard for these new settlers, and the 110,000 rubles loaned them by the Government availed them little.

The second ingress occurred in the thirties. Nicholas I, like his predecessor, was bent on tampering with the occupations and customs of the Jewish people. His Government used both enticements and force. Regarding

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agriculture as a means of social pedagogy, he offered a number of inducements to would-be farmers, including exemptions from the new and dreaded duty of serving in the army. This alone was sufficient to send the Jews in numbers to the pioneering country. At first it was planned to settle them in Siberia, but subsequently the emperor changed his mind, with the result that after a long journey they had to face about toward Kherson. Again there were privations on the way and disappointments on arrival. Those who reached the goal brought epidemics with them which killed one-twelfth of the population. Seven hundred families settled in the south, forming four more colonies.

Government activities which promised fresh trouble for the Jews, especially the traders, spurred them, ten years later, to respond again to official encouragement of farming. The law of 1847 allowed all Jews to enter the agricultural class, and offered the novices such privileges as exemption from military service for twenty-five years, and from taxes for ten years, but it also contained a clause providing for the induction into military service of settlers failing to make a success of their holdings within six years. In spite of the latter draconic provision, over 10,000 families registered as wishing to settle on the land, but because of inadequate loans, the unfriendly attitude of the local authorities, and the resistance of the *kahals**, only two hundred families made the move. By the middle of the century, besides fourteen colonies in the province of Kherson, fourteen in that of Ekaterinoslav, and forty-five villages in the province of Kiev, there were some settlements in the western provinces, as well as in Bessarabia,—forming altogether a population of some 65,000. Many of the

* A Hebrew word meaning "assembly" or "community"—hence the local government.

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colonists, though nominally farmers, actually clung to their old work as artisans. Outwardly, the settlements looked more like Jewish townlets than like farming communities, and in many respects life there moved in the old ways. The women did not toil in the fields. The young spent long hours over musty books of religious lore (there was one *melamed* to every nine pupils). The Hasidic holy men and the rabbis held undisputed power. The agricultural experiment failed to break up the traditional Jewish way of life. A half-hearted, inefficient and arbitrary policy prevented it from being carried out on a scale that could in any measure affect the economic status of the Jewish masses. The vast project tailed off into insignificance.

Under Alexander II the Government ceased to encourage Jewish farming. Crown land was no longer allotted for the purpose, and even settlement on private land was hedged about with limitations. Furthermore, the financing of the settlements was now done with moneys from the special taxes levied on the Jews. At the same time Jews in the agricultural class were allowed to change their status and register as burghers and merchants. The Government generally inclined to an economic policy of laissez-faire in regard to the Jewish people, and left the old settlements to their own devices. Their condition, curiously enough, improved. If the settlers were not as well off as the German colonists, they were in a better state than the local peasantry. A larger proportion of the population derived a living from the soil. With the introduction of universal military service in 1874, the colonists lost their privilege of exemption from that duty, and gradually other privileges were taken from them. But they now had the support of Jewish public organizations. Most important of these was The Society for the Promotion of

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Agriculture and Crafts among the Jews. Later on, international agencies, such as The Jewish Colonization Association, also lent their aid to the maintenance of the settlements, offering technical instruction and loans.

The so-called Temporary Rules of 1882, which were in force until the revolution, marked a complete reversal of the Government's policy with regard to Jewish agriculture. As the new restriction barred the Jews from purchasing or leasing land outside of urban limits, all agricutural occupations were closed to the race. This law, which applied only to Russia proper, was in 1891 supplemented by a similar law affecting Poland. The law did not affect those already engaged in farming, and the census of 1897 disclosed the fact that 2.9 percent of all the gainfully employed persons of Jewish faith were engaged in agricultural pursuits, the entire Jewish agricultural population being over 190,000.[1] Half of this population lived in the colonies, of which there were some 300 at the end of the century, those situated in the southwestern and northwestern provinces being in the nature of small scattered settlements.[2] A few derived their living from animal husbandry and forestry.

The colonies were by that time (1882) real farming communities. At the end of the century only nine percent of the population in the Kherson settlements lived by work other than tilling the land. A hundred years after the first Jewish pioneers had established themselves on the soil an investigator wrote: "With every year the colonies are growing stronger. Men of the old non-agricultural habits are living out their last years, and they are being replaced by a different type of people, who have grown up in a peasant atmosphere and have the thoughts and ambitions of true tillers of the soil." [3] The history of the settlements proves beyond a

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doubt that there is nothing in the make-up of east European Jewry to prevent it from forming a sturdy farmer class.

Soon after the Bolshevik revolution, the idea of fostering Jewish agriculture, which had occupied the statesmen of the empire, took hold of the minds of the Communist leaders. Lenin himself favored the notion, and so did the Central Committee of the Communist Party. It seemed the most desirable way out of the economic cul-de-sac into which the forces of the revolution had driven the Jewish people. A Jewish Communist conference, held in June, 1919, adopted a resolution which emphasized the importance of settling the Jews on the nationalized land as a means of combating their impoverishment. The following month the Central Jewish Commissariat submitted to the Commissariat of Agriculture a memorandum "Concerning the Spread of Agriculture among the Jewish Masses and the Organization of Jewish Agricultural Colonies and Cooperatives."[1] The Commissariat of Agriculture recognized the desirability of encouraging Jewish farming, whereupon a Government appeal was issued, calling upon the poorer classes of the people to form farming groups without delay, and promising to clear the way for them to the new occupation.

"The Soviet Power," read the appeal, "has liberated you from the burden of disabilities. You have become free citizens. You can live where you please and do what you please. But in a Socialist State there is no room for speculation and so-called 'free commerce,' which enables rich merchants and speculators to suck the blood of wage-earners and of the poor. The Soviet Power stubbornly fights speculation and free commerce, and thereby, against its own will, deals a heavy blow to

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the Jewish masses, which, owing to the Czars' policy, have until now been forced to live by petty trade and other precarious occupations. But while it deprives you of your shameful and unprofitable business, it gives you at the same time the right and the opportunity to take up healthy, honest, productive work, including agriculture, which, under the Czars' rule, was forbidden you; join the ranks of the workers and the Soviet Power will come to your aid!" [5] An enquête made by the Jewish Commissariat established the fact that the Jewish masses in the western provinces were eager to enter the new field, but as far as Government encouragement went, the matter rested there. The circumstances of civil war meant the temporary abandonment of all plans for peaceful reconstruction. Yet even without the pilotage of the State, and in the face of all but insuperable difficulties, the land movement was slowly making headway.

Civil war ravaged both the old colonies and such new settlements as were attempted. One of the old settlements in the province of Ekaterinoslav was actually razed to the ground. Of the fifteen colonies in the provinces of Kiev, Volyn, Podol and Chernigov, only six were in existence by 1919, owing to the devasting effect of the war and the pogroms.[6] Then famine stalked through the settlements, leaving desolation in its wake. A representative of the Ort who visited many Ukrainian colonies in the spring of 1922 described them as ruined, the houses tumbling to pieces, the trees dying, the gardens laid waste, and the very bodies of the settlers shrunken to skeletons. By his account, in the period from January to May, 1922, there were in nine colonies only sixteen births, and half of these babies died. The wretched state of the settlements by the end of the year

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may be judged from the following description: "The buildings were destroyed, most of the settlers had no horses, few owned cows. Young horned cattle was completely absent. There were very few implements, and those that remained needed repairs and could not be used. The population lacked seed grain for summer seeding. Its purchasing power was reduced to nothing; the morale of the farmers was very low." [7]

Thereafter, the colonies began to recuperate rapidly, largely owing to the financial assistance of the Jewish Colonization Society and the JDC. The colonists clung to the settlements, in spite of their denuded state. As early as 1920 they had begun to return to their fields and to reassert claims to their lots, some of which had been nationalized, others having been occupied by the local peasantry. The Jewish farmers had the assistance of the Soviet Government. By now eleven of the fifteen colonies in the provinces of Kiev, Podol, Volyn and Chernigov, in the eastern Ukraine, are again in working trim, the holdings there being equal to those of 1914, but the settlers cannot cultivate so much ground, for want of houses and stables which they are not in a position to rebuild. Some of the farmers do not live in the settlements. In this region the development of Jewish farms depends partly on the liquidation of Soviet farms, partly on the acquisition of suburban tracts not in use for other purposes, and partly on the very limited State land reserves.[8]

As has been indicated, a spontaneous, unorganized forward-to-the-land movement, unassisted save by the Ort, was on foot in the distressed Jewish communities in the first years after the revolution. In the beginning the peasants appropriating the gentry's land would in some instances urge the Jews to take part in the seizure.

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Not being sure that they were acting within the law, they wanted their Jewish neighbors to share the responsibility. In due time the State took a hand in the distribution of land, and plots were given over "in perpetual toiling usage" to all those ready to spend their own labor upon them. Prodded by want, the Jews seized the opportunity offered by the new agrarian policy and laid claim to a share of the nationalized land. Along the Dnieper they obtained holdings as early as 1918. Taking to the plow in the hard years of civil war and military communism, they held on to their parcels with their teeth. In many cases they occupied the land without sanction. Often the Jewish claimant was confronted with skepticism and even with hostility on the part of local land committees. Further, those who got a patch of earth to till did not know how to go about it, and generally did not have either the implements or the cattle with which to work. What they did have was a natural tenacity and resourcefulness and the energy of despair. And so, in the face of enormous difficulties, a few gained a foothold on the soil. In 1923, in eastern Ukraine, 2,786 Jewish families were growing, besides cereals, such commercial plants as beets, flax, hops, tobacco,—on small plots situated near the townlets and aggregating an area of 9,227 dessiatines.[9] In the province of Homel alone, 160 agricultural artels* were established prior to 1922, but over half of them went under for want of equipment and seed grain.[10] It has been estimated that in 1923 the Jewish agricultural population of the Union was nearly 76,000, as against some 53,000 in 1913 in the same territory.[11] At the Agricultural Exhibition held in Moscow in 1923, the Jewish pavilion attracted much favorable attention.

* An artel is a simple form of cooperative.

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In many small towns in White Russia and the Ukraine a considerable number of artisans and small traders have been leading an amphibious economic existence, earning their living partly by working small patches of land situated in or near the town limits, which they can work without tearing up stakes. In the dying Jewish townlets a vegetable patch, a cow, and sometimes a horse, came to be all that stood between many a family and starvation. Typical is the case of the town of Sirotino in the province of Vitebsk, which was thoroughly investigated in 1924.[12] All the courtyards, and even some deserted lanes, were dug up for kitchen gardens, tall beets lording it where once peasant carts raised the dust. Half of the families owned a cow apiece. Some, indeed, had sold everything to buy the precious animal.

The number of families taking up farming in a small way continued to grow, but land situated near the towns and available for Jewish settlers in due time became exceedingly scarce. It was then that the prospective farmers set out for the south, where free land was still to be had for the asking. Before the end of 1924 about 600 families, acting individually and on their own initiative, settled in northern Crimea, where they leased some 18,000 dessiatines.[13]

From the start, there was much wagging of tongues and not a little spilling of ink on the subject of Jewish agriculture, but no practical steps were taken to guide or assist the movement until, in the summer of 1924, the State was in a position to take a hand in the matter. In July the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the White Russian Soviet Republic decreed that "in distributing the free land . . . the requests of Jews, whether as individuals or groups, and irrespective of whether they had previously engaged in farming, should be honored equally with the requests of the local

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agricultural population." [14] Further, it created a commission charged with the duty of carrying out this provision and also of finding the means necessary for settlement.

This law conferred a privilege on the race, since ordinarily the claims of the non-farming element received attention only after the claims of the agricultural population had been satisfied. Speaking before a meeting of the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic on December 25, 1926, the Chairman made clear why the law had discriminated in favor of the Jews: "The Soviet Government did this because it realized that before the revolution the Jews did not work the land not because they did not want to, but because they were prevented from doing so: the Jews were forbidden by law to work the land. Having enabled the Jews to obtain Government land, the Soviet Government has not conferred any privilege on this part of the population, but has simply corrected an historic injustice committed against the Jewish masses.[15]

Four days after this law tending to encourage Jewish agriculture was passed in White Russia, a similar measure was enacted in the Ukraine. A month later, that is, in August, 1924, a committee on the land settlement of Jews, known as the *Komzet* (a word formed by the initials of its Russian name), and functioning under the Council of Nationalities, was appointed by the central Government of the Union. An auxiliary society, in the nature of a private organization, known under the telescoped name of *Ozet,* came into being a year later. Its chief function is to raise funds at home for the work. An event of the greatest importance to the cause of Jewish agriculture took place in July, 1924, when the Joint Distribution Committee organized the American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation, Agro-Joint for

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short. This meant substantial foreign help for the settlers. The corporation was an outgrowth of the reconstruction department of the JDC. This organization decided that the encouragement of Jewish agriculture was the most rational, economical and expedient method of reconstruction.

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CHAPTER VIII

FORWARD TO THE LAND

THE agricultural settlements are a bright spot in the picture of Jewish life in the Soviet Union. True, Jewish agriculture is only in its infancy as yet,—a promise rather than a solid achievement. But it is a robust infant that bids fair to develop into healthy maturity. The movement became one of the concerns of the State and won public encouragement both at home and abroad only in 1924. The results accomplished since are not inconsiderable. Before the war, 9,887 Jewish families (52,758 persons)[1] were tilling 103,241 dessiatines within the boundaries of the territory eventually included in the Soviet Union.[2] Within the next decade, partly as a result of a spontaneous land movement, the agricultural population was doubled, and the cultivated area, too, increased greatly. At the time when the Government Committee for the Settlement of the Jews on the Land (Komzet) was formed (August, 1924), there were 17,198 families tilling 156,115 dessiatines. At the end of the third year of its activity, the Komzet proudly pointed to the fact that the agricultural population had increased twofold, making a total of 33,357 families (165,000 persons),[3] and that the holdings had increased almost threefold in area, reaching an aggregate of 452,032 dessiatines.[4] Thus within the three years that followed the foundation of the Komzet, more than 16,000 families were settled on the land, having been granted nearly 296,000 dessiatines by the State. It may

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be noted that the Jewish farming population of Palestine is only 32,000, after half a century's efforts at colonization.[5] The allocation of land for 1928 has begun. The new tracts are sufficient to accommodate hundreds of families and are adjacent to the older settlements in the Ukraine and the Crimea. Should colonization progress at the rate now obtaining, it will take less than twenty years for the Komzet to carry out its program of settling a hundred thousand families on the land.

Like other settlers, the Jews get the land free, a family retaining its holding as long as a single member continues to work it. The acreage per family varies with the district, and is generally adequate. Besides the land for tilling, the State grants the settlers free tracts of timber land from which lumber may be obtained for building purposes, and some credits, from 300 to 500 rubles per family, for water supply and the purchase of implements and seeds. In addition, the settlers are allowed reduced transportation rates and are exempt from taxes and from military duty for the first three years. The cost incident to installing a family on the land in the south has risen from an average of from $600 to $750 to an average of from $800 to $1000.[6] It is less in the north. Naturally, the State in its present impoverished condition is not able to bear the full burden of these expenses, nor can it offer more credits to the Jewish settlers than to the others. The prospective farmers, on their part, are not in a position to contribute a substantial portion of the costs out of their own pockets. Many of them have no material possessions. Out of 6,836 applicants for settlements in White Russia, one-half could not make any investment at all, and forty percent could invest less than $100.[7] The settlers are recruited to a certain extent from the artisan group, but chiefly from among the petty traders, for

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whom there is no room in the present economic scheme, and from among those whom ill fortune has left without a definite occupation. Perhaps eighty-five percent of the settlers are drawn from these classes, and only a relatively small number are men used to heavy manual labor, having some farming experience, or brain-workers.[8] It is expected that within the next few years the less poverty-stricken traders will flock to the soil, investing in it the small capital that would otherwise be swallowed up in a vain attempt to maintain their unprofitable shops. Many of the men and women who are now working in the fields, and in sweat and pain are building up a new life, would, no doubt, still be languishing behind an unvisited counter or starving in some other fashion, were it not for one happy circumstance, namely, the fact that the land movement won the assistance of foreign relief organizations.

Among these are the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) of London and Paris, the Berlin Ort, which is a post-revolutionary off-shoot of the old Russian organization bearing the same name, and several minor societies in the Americas and in Great Britain (*Ikor* in the United States; *Prokor* in Argentina; Auxiliary Committee in England and South Africa). The *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* in Germany is also planning to take a hand in the work, and in France there has recently been formed a Society of Friends of Jewish Agriculture in U. S. S. R. The foreign organization that counts most is the Agro-Joint. Until January 1, 1927, this agency did about three-fourths of the work connected with the settlement of the Jews on the land since the Government first took a hand in the matter. It cared for 65 percent of all the families settled since it came into being.[9] At the end of 1927 the JCA was serving 49 colonies and planning to participate in the

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settlement of 3,250 families.[10] Of the 13,656,000 rubles spent on the settlers up to August, 1927, the Agro-Joint contributed 7,349,000 rubles. The share of the JCA and the Ort together amounted to a little over a million rubles. The rest of the credits came from the Treasury (2,403,000 rubles) and from banks and other domestic sources (nearly three million rubles).[11] These sums do not include the moneys invested by the settlers, the value of the building materials contributed by the Government, the reduction on the fares, and, above all, the value of the land, which is estimated at from fifty to seventy-five million dollars.[12]

There were several reasons why American Jewish leadership chose to give such generous support to the land movement. Even under the worst conditions, argues the director of the Agro-Joint, a farm unit, whether a family or a group, can live on what it produces, and is less dependent on uncontrollable market conditions than any other occupation would allow it to be. It is "the most expedient and cheapest form of reconstruction work." The settlers obtain their independence by means of health-giving work. Moreover, the Government is backing the project to the full extent of its power, and the settlers take their place beside the workingmen and peasants who are the responsible citizens of the Soviet Republic.[13]

No one who has seen anything of the experiment is deceived into thinking that the settlers are living a bucolic idyll. Quite the contrary. Most of these men and women are unused to the demands of heavy and sustained physical labor. They are exhausted by long privation, and subsist on food which is still in a large measure inadequate. They are harried by shortages of all kinds. They have to accustom themselves to phlegmatic and unfathomable oxen, to complicated machinery

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and to other perplexing elements of a totally unfamiliar environment. The conditions under which they work are barely tolerable. The lack of public baths in the Crimean settlements, what with the absence of any streams or lakes, is a serious matter. Sanitation is generally poor, and medical help wanting. And then there is the scarcity of schools which threatens with illiteracy a people to whom book learning is the bread of life. Born individualists, they have to adjust themselves to team-work, which their new occupation imposes upon them. The resultant strain upon body and mind is severe.

The services rendered by the Agro-Joint are typical of the help that the settlers get from other foreign and domestic organizations. The first step the would-be farmers take, long before they pull up stakes, is to organize a voluntary association, and register with the local authorities as desirous of obtaining land. Then the group sends two delegates, usually an old man and a young man, to the district where they plan to settle. The local office of the Agro-Joint, cooperating with the Komzet, assists the pair in finding a suitable tract, and this, with the approval of the Komzet, is formally allotted to them by the local land office. Then the working squad, composed of one or two able-bodied members of each family, arrives on the spot, usually with some horses and tools. These people are provided with additional implements, seed grain, and lumber for a temporary shelter, and go to work. In the spring, if there are barracks to house them, the rest of the group come out. Some of the pioneers live in dug-outs during the first months and cook under the open sky. A matter of first importance in the southern settlements is the water supply, which is scarce. The Agro-Joint sees to it that the colonies are promptly provided for in this

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respect: old wells are restored, and new ones dug, some of them being artesian wells. The first year the plowing is done by the organization's tractor squad. The older colonists, who have been trained in the use of tractors, may rent them. For the rest, the Agro-Joint supplies loans in kind or funds for the purchase of seed, live stock, implements, and for the establishment of such enterprises as creameries, tanneries, and mills. The Agro-Joint has financed the construction of seventy-seven percent of all the houses built by the settlers previous to January 1, 1927.[14] Then, too, it plants vineyards and orchards for the colonies, and erects school houses, bath-houses, stores, cooperatives and banks.

All the funds disbursed by the Agro-Joint are in the nature of loans. They are issued to the settlers' associations in the new colonies, and to the agricultural cooperatives in the older settlements. The loans must be paid back within a given time, and bear three percent interest. The attitude of the Agro-Joint is the very opposite of philanthropic or paternalistic. Its only free gift to the settlers is agricultural instruction. For this purpose the organization maintains a staff of instructors, who live with the settlers and are in every sense their mentors, guides and friends.

At present the Agro-Joint does not extend its operations to White Russia. Here the first act of the Government Committee for the settlement of Jews on the land was to register the would-be settlers. It was found that fully one-fifth of the entire Jewish population of the republic wished to take up farming immediately. Some of these people were manual laborers, and not a few were working the land in a small way on plots near their homes in the towns. Before the Komzet came into being, 6,339 families were cultivating 33,950 dessiatines.

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By August, 1927, over 2,200 families were added to the agricultural population, and nearly 25,000 dessiatines to the area held by the Jews.[15]

The one circumstance that favors the development of the White Russian colonies is that the cost of settling there is almost half the cost of settling in the south: water and timber are plentiful, the soil is of a light variety, easy to work, and, the distances being small, the cost of transportation is likewise reduced. But free land in this region is scarce, so that the holdings are small: White Russia's share of the entire Jewish agricultural population of the Union is 26 percent, but less than 13 percent of the whole area under cultivation by the Jews is situated in this republic.[16] The other serious drawback is that the Jews hold no continuous tract of land here, so that the settlements are scattered. As a result, the cultural and social opportunities are limited. The settlers feel lost in an alien world. On the contrary, the southern colonies hold out the hope of a Jewish school, a prayer house, a Jewish way of living generally. For these reasons, a number of families have wrenched themselves from their familiar surroundings and emigrated to the south.

A considerable portion of the land in White Russia is held communally and worked cooperatively. On the whole the Jewish farmers are keen, active, eager to adopt scientific methods and to profit by agronomical instruction, so that although they are mere tyros, they get better results than their neighbors, who have tilled the soil for generations. In 1926 the Jewish artels received thirty-nine awards at agricultural exhibitions. In the beginning the local population had looked with a skeptical and often jaundiced eye at the new farmers: aside from racial prejudice, there is the fact, already mentioned, that land is not plentiful in White Russia.

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But as time went on, the Jews succeeded in establishing tolerably friendly relations with their neighbors.

The chief seat of Jewish agriculture is in the southeastern Ukraine. Here are located nearly two-thirds of the population and over two-thirds of the tilled area. In this region there was relative abundance of unoccupied fertile land, left over from the great estates after the local peasantry had carved out their own sufficient portions. Unlike the settlements in White Russia, the Jewish villages here are located close together on continuous tracts of land. Most of them are situated in the districts of Kherson and Krivoi Rog. Here the new settlements adjoin the old colonies, and seem like new sprouts from the old tree. A considerable number of settlements exist also in the districts of Mariupol, Zaporozhie and Melitopol, as well as in the Odessa district, whither there was a spontaneous influx of farmers beginning with the autumn of 1923. Some isolated agricultural communities are scattered throughout the western Ukraine. The total figures for the Ukraine, as of the summer of 1927, are more than 21,000 families, occupying over 265,000 dessiatines.[17] About two-fifths of the land is held by the old colonies, of which there are thirty-six. The land grants hereabouts since 1924 amount to 145,000 dessiatines. New villages to the number of 113 have grown up, and twenty-six more are being laid out, the total number of houses either built or in process of construction being 4,270.[18]

The other important center is the northern part of the Crimean peninsula, which forms an autonomous republic within the R. S. F. S. R. The first Jews to take up land here were a group of *Chalutzim* (pioneers): young men without family ties, who combined the Communist faith with a zeal for Zion, and who regarded

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their agricultural work in Russia as a preparation for life in Palestine. In 1922 they took a tract of 5,000 acres and founded the colony of Tel Khai—the Hill of Life—within nine miles of the city of Jankoy. Soon afterward, Jewish settlers looking for a permanent home began to trickle in. Owing to the efforts of the Komzet, the 50,000 acres that these settlers occupied as lessees were turned over to them on the "perpetual toiler's usage" basis. In the summer of 1927 there were over 3,300 families working an area of over 108,000 dessiatines.[19] It is at present possible to travel from Theodosia to Eupatoria, a distance of 200 versts,* without leaving, except for insignificant stretches, the territory of the Jewish villages.

Both in the Ukraine and in the Crimea the tendency is against communal farming. The first year or so, the associations the settlers had formed before they left their native towns hold together, in spite of their relative heterogeneity. But as soon as the new farmers are more or less established, as soon as the individual families have a roof over their heads and have begun to acquire some possessions, the collectives break into smaller artels or go to pieces completely. Yet even those settlers who hold the land individually do some of the work cooperatively. The Government favors communal farms, but aware of the obstacles which stand in the way, it keeps hands off. At the same time it encourages the simplest forms of collectivism, such as associations for the common use of farm machinery. Cooperatives of every kind are fostered with assiduity.

Some hundreds of dessiatines have been set aside for Jewish farmers in the Great Russian provinces of Pskov and Smolensk, and thousands of dessiatines in Central

* 1 Verst = ⅔ of a mile.

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Asia, within the territory of Uzbekistan, as well as in Northern Caucasus and in the Caucasian republic of Daghestan.

The outlook for the land movement is hopeful. The enterprise has aroused great expectations and high enthusiasm, and practically all factions unite in supporting it. So large is the number of would-be settlers that only a fraction of them can be accommodated. On the average, only ten percent of those who take up the work fail to persevere in it. The quitters are mostly trained artisans and brain-workers. The rest have definitely severed their ties with the past and are likely to stick to the soil. It is too early to gauge the success of the movement, but it may be pointed out that already some settlements are self-supporting, and it is probable that the rest of them will be so within five years. The settlers possess the requisite qualities of endurance and courage. "Not so many years ago," writes Dr. Rosen, director of the Agro-Joint, "it was my good fortune to spend a few years among the people who are settling the western prairies in the United States of America, and I may say frankly that among these Jewish settlers in southern Russia I was surprised to find pioneering material in no way inferior to the sturdy pioneers of the West. The spirit of the settlers is remarkable. Regardless of the very trying conditions they have to live under, without any conveniences whatever, in shanties or dug-outs, often under the open sky, doing very hard work that most of them have not been accustomed to, they take it cheerfully and feel that the future is with them." [20] A physician who observed the settlers closely for ten weeks, while traveling in the guise of a delegate from a group of prospective farmers, reports that the colonists do not treat the live-stock and the machinery as carefully

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as they should. He finds, however, that on the whole the settlers, underfed and exhausted as they are, toil "beyond their strength" and never complain of too much work. Everybody finds something to do, in the fields, in the vineyard, in the kitchen garden,—from doddering ancients to small children. The young people, particularly the girls, having freed themselves from a position of idleness and parisitism, are giving a highly creditable account of themselves.[21] The temper of the farmers is reflected in the very names of the villages, which speak of hope, work, life.

Unfortunately, the reserves of free land in European Russia are being rapidly exhausted. In White Russia the hope of the settlers lies in the reclamation of swamp land, of which there is an abundance there. If the necessary funds for drainage were available, large tracts could be obtained, so that a number of settlements lying close to each other could be established. The Government of this republic is alert to the needs of the Jewish element. It has altered the status of 116 townlets so as to turn them into villages, thereby automatically placing the Jewish population in the category of land-needy peasantry, and thus entitling them to additional acreage.[22]

In the Ukraine some acres may become available for cultivation near the metal mines of Krivoi Rog, since this section seems to have no industrial possibilities. Another area will be opened up for agriculture when the huge dam which is being built for the new water-power station on the Dnieper Rapids (Dneprostroi) stops the flooding of certain territories, and there is reason to believe that a portion of this acreage may be allocated to the Jewish settlers. Several colonies will be planted in the near future in the vicinity of the town of Kahkhovka, on the lower reaches of the

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Dnieper, where sand overlays rich soil and where, for the past two or three years, the Jews have supplemented the scant earnings from their regular occupations by vinticulture. A few hundred families will go there from other parts of the country to grow grapes and apricots and a crop quite new to Russia—sweet potatoes. This year some 45,000 acres were set aside by the Ukrainian Commissariat of Education for Jewish colonists within the sphere of the Agro-Joint's activity.[23] But here in the Ukraine no large tracts are available. Only a few thousand additional Jewish families can be accommodated. There is an excess farming population and a scarcity of land in the black earth belt, in spite of the breaking up of the estates. Only the adoption of intensive agriculture, an unlikely eventuality in the immediate future, would make room for more newcomers.

The Ukraine as a place for colonization has this disadvantage, that the rural population is a nationally homogeneous group, so that the Jewish villages are like tiny islands in a Ukrainian sea. There is no such overwhelming native majority in the Crimea. This region presents a kind of ethnic patchwork, what with Tatars, Russians, Germans, Bulgarians, Esthonians, to mention only some of the fifteen major elements of the population of the peninsula. Where there are enough national groups to make a Babel, the position of the Jewish minority is less precarious. Another and more important circumstance favoring Jewish colonization in the northern Crimea is that more land is available here. It has been lying idle for generations because of the scarcity of water. To get at it, it is necessary to dig deep wells, at an expense which is beyond the means of the average land-needy peasant. In the Eupatoria and Jankoy districts there are large tracts of free land, as much as 400,000 dessiatines, which are not needed by the local

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population. The Azov Sea links this region to the so-called Azov flatlands in the northern Caucasus, a strip approximately 25 versts wide and 100 versts long, which fringes the eastern shore of the Azov sea, from the city of Temruk to the forty-fifth degree latitude. In the summer of 1927 a Government commission surveyed this region with a view to ascertaining the possibility of draining the swamps. It is believed that if there were sufficient capital to reclaim these flatlands, they could easily sustain, along with the Eupatoria-Jankoy districts, as many as half a million people.

Together with the human material and the land, capital is a determining factor in the development of colonization work. It is to be hoped that in this regard, the enterprise, as time goes on, will be decreasingly dependent on foreign help. The Ozet is raising half a million rubles through a lottery, and it is planned to float a twenty million dollar loan to finance future operations.

The president of the Komzet is reported to have remarked recently that should the settlements in and around the Crimea grow at the present rate, the Azov sea would have to be renamed the Jewish Sea.[24] He might have added that if the Crimea-Azov development should materialize, what amounts to a Jewish province would exist in a region which was the seat of prosperous Jewish communities in the ancient world. In the first centuries of the Christian era Hellenized Jews from Asia Minor followed the Greeks to the shores of the Black and Azov seas. In the Bosporan Kingdom, which straddled the Cimerian Bosporus (now the Straits of Kerch), they established well organized communities. The persecutions to which the Byzantine Jews were subjected as the Church gained power, served to swell the

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population of these Jewish settlements. In the eighth century Phanagoria on the Taman peninsula was practically a Jewish town. An Arabic geographer, writing shortly after 900 A. D., speaks of the Jewish city of Samkers, on the same peninsula. By a curious coincidence, that Graeco-Scythian soil which faintly remembers a Jewish past may come to nourish a Jewish future.

The main land reserves of the Union are situated in its Asiatic section and all colonization schemes center around it. The Government of Nicholas I had at one time toyed with the project of shifting a portion of the Jewish population to Siberia, and the plan has now been taken up by the Soviet authorities in all earnestness. By an act dated March 28, 1928, the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Union set aside "for contiguous Jewish colonies" all the free land in the so-called Bira-Bidzhan region in the Russian Far East.[25] It occupies the triangular south-eastern corner of the Amur Province, and is bounded by that part of the river Amur which lies between the city of Khabarovsk and the mouth of the river Khingan, by that river, the Ussuri railway and the rivers Urma and Tunguska, the latter a tributary of the Amur. The territory is somewhat larger than Palestine and just about the size of Vermont, but its population is under 30,000,—mostly recent settlers having no historical claim to the land. The other points in its favor are: good conditions for agriculture and cattle-breeding, an abundance of forests and some mineral resources, also proximity to the railway and to the chief markets of the Far East. On the other hand, it is an untamed wilderness; in places the soil must be reclaimed; the winters are severe and there are dangerous summer floods. It is estimated that the region could easily support 50,000 families, of which

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40,000 could engage in agriculture.[26] Besides, to the north, beyond the railway line, there are vast stretches of unoccupied land. According to a recent Moscow dispatch, the territory available to Jewish settlers in this region has been further increased, so that it now stretches on both sides of the railway.

The Komzet has already issued instructions regarding the preliminary steps to be taken in colonizing this Bira-Bidzhan territory. The enthusiasm for the project is considerable, particularly in the youth. This year it is intended to settle from 500 to 600 families and to spend 1,400,000 rubles, which the Government is furnishing, on improving the land, building roads, and erecting houses.[27] At the present juncture it would appear that the work will have to be carried on without foreign help of any kind. This pioneering task will be a test of the hardihood and perseverance of the race.

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CHAPTER IX

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

FROM the first it has been the intention of the Government to plant the agricultural settlements on continuous tracts of land. The object is to further the social and cultural life of the farmers, and thereby minimize the more forbidding aspects of the new occupation. In some circles, both Communist and non-partisan, the hope is cherished that eventually the land tilled by the Jews, notably the region on both shores of the Azov Sea, will achieve the status of an autonomous republic, the first Jewish State since the Dispersion forced this people into an extra-territorial, non-political existence. Perhaps the future will witness the formation of another such center within the Union, on the fertile plains watered by the mighty Amur, in the Far East. The decree setting aside the Bira-Bidzhan region for Jewish colonization says explicitly (paragraph 5): "Should the colonization of the region proceed successfully, the possibility of developing it into a Jewish national administrative unit ought to be kept in view."

As soon as the land movement results in a Jewish majority on a sufficiently extensive stretch of territory, the formation of a Jewish republic will be in order. Statements to this effect have been made more than once, both officially and unofficially. But though the matter is taken seriously, it is rather a distant goal than a question of immediate practical import. The conference of the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party

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which took place in December, 1926, declared itself in favor of the establishment of an autonomous Jewish State. It expressed at the same time a belief in the possibility and the desirability of the consolidation of the Jewish masses into a nation with a territory of its own. It subordinated this matter, however, to its fundamental and paramount purpose, which is the achievement of the new social order. The Communists regard Jewish territorial autonomy as a means of serving the "current interests" [1] of the Bolshevik revolution, as a milestone on the road to socialism travelled by the Jewish masses.

It is agreed on all sides that the Jewish republic would prove no more than a partial solution of the problem of the Jewish minority, since the autonomous territory—or territories—could not possibly include all the Jewish communities of the Union. Since it is part of the Soviet policy to safeguard the rights of a given minority by allowing it to administer its own affairs, strictly within the Soviet law, in its own language, the Jews, too, have their own soviets in the towns and villages where they are in the majority. Indeed, Jewish soviets exist wherever there is a considerable Jewish group. They have been formed in the Crimea as well as in White Russia. Here there are eighteen petty soviets, four of them rural.[2] In the Ukraine the smallest administrative unit is the village (*selo*), that next in order is the region (*rayon*), and the largest unit is the district (*okrug*). A minimum of 1,000 Ukrainians or 500 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a soviet. No less than 25,000 Ukrainians or 10,000 non-Ukrainians may elect a regional soviet. On April 1, 1927, there were 115 Jewish soviets of the lowest category, both rural and semi-urban, and one Jewish regional soviet in the Kherson district.[3] The seat of the latter is in the old colony of Seidemenukha, now renamed Kalinindorf for

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the president of the Union. It was convened for the first time on March 22, 1927, and the session was the occasion of much rejoicing, 3,000 guests being present to celebrate the event. The area of the *rayon* is 57,636 dessiatines, 27,000 of which are occupied by Jewish settlers, and the population of 18,000 includes some 16,000 Jews, all farmers. Delegates to this regional soviet come from seven rural soviets, six of which are Jewish. One of these, as well as the local post office, is named for Sholom Aleichem.[4] There is a Jewish police commissioner with a force of three men at his command, not to mention a ram-shackle two-room jail.

The Kalinindorf rayon is the only fairly large unit in the U. S. S. R. administered by a Jewish soviet. It is expected that more such soviets will come into existence in the near future: in the districts of Krivoi-Rog, Zaporozhie, and Mariupol. The more hopeful see in them the nucleus of the Jewish autonomous republic. What delays the formation of such soviets in the farming districts is the fact that the new settlers are exempt from taxation, and so there are not sufficient funds for the purpose.

In the Jewish soviets practically all the transactions, both oral and written, are in Yiddish: it is the language of the sessions, of all instruments, and of the correspondence. The new administrative machinery creaks, but does its work. The townlet soviets in particular have proved their efficiency. In some cases, the soviets use Yiddish in their communications to other government agencies, so that the executive committees of some non-Jewish regional soviets have to maintain a special department to handle Jewish business. Last spring plans were under way for the establishment in Kiev of courses which would train clerks for the Jewish soviets. There are also a number of lower courts

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(thirty-six in the Ukraine[5] and five in White Russia[6]), where the business is conducted entirely in Yiddish. In some of the larger cities, as, for example, Kiev and Odessa, there are station houses where a man can file a complaint in Yiddish, and have it written down in the same language by a Jewish policeman. Likewise, marriages, births and deaths may be registered at the Government Bureau of Records in Yiddish. An inscription in Yiddish appears for the first time in history on the coat of arms of a State, namely, on that of the White Russian Republic. Yiddish is, of course, the language in which Jewish children get their schooling, and is also employed in a number of children's homes where Jewish children are cared for.

A mere fraction of the Jewish population (a little over ten percent in the Ukraine)[7] elects its own soviets. As regards administration, the rest is indistinguishable from the general citizenry. It goes without saying that the Jewish wage-earners, employees and professionals enjoy the full measure of civic and political rights, including suffrage. Owing to the efforts of the Jewish Communists, the artisans and even the poorer element among the middlemen have also been granted the vote. The settlers, too, irrespective of their previous occupations, are full-fledged citizens. Only the Jewish middle class, like the new bourgeoisie generally, being, so to speak, beyond the pale of the Soviet State, has no political rights. In the elections of 1926, fifteen percent of the Jewish population in the Ukraine was denied suffrage.[8]

The interests of the Jewish masses are not without representation in the higher government departments. The Commissariat of Nationalities had a department commonly known as the Jewish Commissariat. At present the Jews in White Russia have a place on the

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national commissions attached to the central executive committee and the district executive committees, while in the Ukraine and the R. S. F. S. R. they send delegates to the commissions representing national minorities, which are part of the central and local executive committees. Being an extra-territorial minority, they have no seats in the Council of Nationalities. The delegation to this Council from White Russia does include a Jew, but that from the Ukraine does not. As a result, the Moldavian Republic, which is part of the Ukraine, and which has a population of half a million, sends four delegates, while three to four times as many Ukrainian Jews have no spokesman there,—a fact which Jewish leadership naturally views with dissatisfaction.

This leadership, it goes without saying, is Communist, since the new order in Russia is based upon the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is in effect the rule of the Communist Party. Within this Party there has been, since 1918, a network of so-called Jewish Sections, just as there are agencies in charge of work among other national minorities. They do not constitute a separate independent organization, like the old Bund, nor do they include all the Jews in the Party. In 1925 there were some 37,000 Jewish Communists, but only 2,000 of them formed the membership of the seventy Jewish Sections scattered throughout the Union.[9] These are attached to local propaganda committees, but have periodic conferences and a central bureau of their own. The workers get their training in a special school and also in the Jewish department of the Communist University of the Western Peoples in Moscow. Yiddish is supposed to be the only language employed by the Sections. They are part of the general machinery of propaganda, the membership consisting of men and women assigned to carry out the decisions of the Party

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which particularly concern the Jewish-speaking masses. In practise the Jewish Sections are to a certain extent free to act on their own initiative. They have the decisive voice in Jewish affairs. They play the tune to which the communities dance. They determine the policies of the public organizations working among their own people, and indeed have the power to make or break them.

Theoretically, Communist leadership leans upon the wage-earning class, but in practise it also bids for the support of the artisans. There is food for discontent among the Jewish masses, what with the misery in the townlets and the distressing amount of unemployment. An urban population, they are naturally inclined to offer aid and comfort to the Opposition within the Party, with its program of industrialization at any price, favoring the cities and sacrificing the interests of the peasantry. But the majority of the Jewish people, like most of the non-Jews, are inclined to accept the existing regime. The Government is no longer the alien, hostile power that it used to be. An index to the changed attitude of the Jews is the fact that they do not evade military duty, as was their wont in the old days when the army was a place of horror. It has been estimated that while the Jews constitute only one and nine-tenths percent of the total population of the Union, there are two and thirteen-hundredths percent of them in the army, navy, and air-fleet. The cavalry excepted, they are represented in every branch of the service, in the ranks and even in the command.[10]

The several public bodies which are on a non-partisan character, that is, those which are accessible to all, are under Communist control. One of them is the previously mentioned Ozet, which promotes the land movement. This rapidly growing society is taking the place

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of the extinct Jewish Public Committee, which was known under its Russian and Jewish telescope names respectively as *Yevobkom* and *Yidgezkom*. The Communists are now in complete control of the Ort also. Its program is primarily industrial, and its activities are confined to the artisans. It offers them vocational instruction and it aims at developing productive cooperation among them. Generally speaking, it stands in the same relation to the handworkers as the Ozet does to the settlers. The organization has recently been reorganized, so as to bring it more into line with Soviet ideas. The Russian Ort must not be confused with the international organization of the same name, with headquarters in Berlin, which is taking part in the work of land settlement. The Culture League (*Kultlig*) which, as its name implies, fosters the arts through libraries, studios, theatres and concerts, and which is a publishing agency as well, is also dominated by the ideas and ideals of the Bolsheviks. Recently a non-partisan organization, which acts as an auxiliary to the League, has come into being.

The Communist rule among the Jews, as elsewhere, is the rule of a well organized and purposeful minority. The members of the race who belong to the Party have been growing in number, although not as rapidly as the general membership of the Party. From 1922 to 1926 this increased 188 percent, while the Jewish membership increased only 142 percent.[11] On October 1, 1926, the Communist Party of the Union counted over 47,000 Jewish members and candidates. The respective figures for the Jewish membership of the Communist Union of Youth, which includes young people between fourteen and twenty-three years old, and of the Pioneers, which is a sort of Bolshevik Boy and Girl Scout organization, were 100,000 (as of December, 1926) and 125,000 (July 1, 1926).[12] The proportion of women

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was somewhat higher than that which obtains among other nationals.[13] According to the census of 1927, there were in the Communist Party 37,655 Jewish members and 11,856 candidates for membership, a total of 49,511 (37,965 men and 11,546 women), or four and three-tenths percent of the total membership.[14]

In conformance with the doctrine of proletarian dictatorship, no organized group of a dissenting political or social faith is permitted to exist. At the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution there were groups of active Jewish Communists in Great Russia, chiefly in Moscow and Leningrad, then Petrograd. On March 7, 1918, there appeared in Leningrad the initial issue of the first Yiddish Communist newspaper. A few months later it changed its place of publication to Moscow, and its title "*Die Wahrheit*" to the less literary "*Der Emes*," under which it has been appearing ever since. In the Ukraine, too, there were groups of Jewish workers with Bolshevist sympathies as early as January, 1918, but the majority followed the leadership of the Bund and the United Jewish Socialist Party (formed by a fusion of several minor semi-socialist parties), both ranged against the party that had seized power. It took over a year for Communism to invade the ranks of the Bund, and it split the organization into two mutually hostile groups. On the eve of Denikin's occupation of Kiev (August, 1919), the Communist wing of the Bund, together with that of the United Jewish Socialist Party, which had suffered a similar fissure, merged with the Communist Party of the Ukraine. In Great Russia the process of the Bund's disintegration was slower, and it was not until April, 1921, that its left wing joined the Communist Party. As its right wing was outlawed, many of its leaders, like other Mensheviks, emigrated. To all intents and purposes, the Bund ceased to be, after a

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quarter of a century of tumultuous existence. At the last meeting not a few grizzled veterans had tears in their eyes. On January 1, 1926, there were in the Communist Party 2,865 members and candidates who had formerly belonged to the Bund.[15] A similar fate befell the United Jewish Socialist Party. By the end of the civil war, the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party, where the former Bundists had found their place, were in sole possession of the field.

The Zionists have been driven underground. Both the orthodox center and the several minor groups which link up Palestinian hopes with various shades of socialism find themselves outlawed. On occasion their members are imprisoned and exiled to Siberia and other distant parts. The Jewish Communists are perhaps more intolerant than their Gentile comrades. The Zionists are suppressed as a reactionary and counter-revolutionary party, which diverts the attention of the Jewish masses from the realities of the class struggle to a nationalistic chimæra. As Palestine is under British mandate, the repressive measures against the Zionists have been given an added excuse, owing to the break with England. They are held up to scorn as playing into the hands of the British imperialists. Only the left wing of the Poale-Zion, which is known as the Jewish Communist Party and subscribes to the tenets of the Third International, is allowed to work in the open. Then, too, a measure of freedom was enjoyed until recently by the Russian branch of the international society known under the Hebrew name of *Hekholutz* (The Pioneer). It had a membership of 3,000:[16] young people who took up farming and industrial work to train themselves for pioneering in Palestine. The organization, which was formed soon after the revolution, and registered in 1923, was tolerated because its aims were nominally economic,

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rather than political, and its platform contained some Communist planks.

The Jewish Leninites have no patience with the Zionist belief that the Jewish problem cannot be solved in the Dispersion. The notion of withdrawing to an historical homeland is highly distasteful to them. The Russian Jew's real homeland, the Communist argues, is the country in which he has lived, however wretchedly, for centuries, and which it is now his task to reshape nearer to a new ideal. Such is also the official attitude generally. This does not mean, however, that the inhabitants of the Soviet Union are innocent of the peculiar complex of anti-Jewish sentiments. Anti-Semitism, so long a tradition and a policy in Russia, has survived the social revolution. Since the institution of the Nep there has been a recrudescence of it, and in some circles it has even waxed stronger than under the old regime. "The Russian intellectuals," said Kalinin, in a speech made on November 27, 1926, at the Moscow conference of the Ozet, "are at present perhaps more anti-Semitic than under Czarism." This was due, he explained, to the Jewish invasion of the Soviet offices that took place early in the revolution.

The ancient prejudice makes itself felt in many ways. The old charges are taking new shapes. The Jews are nepmen. The Jews have invaded the capital and have caused a housing shortage. The Jews are being granted the choicest land. In Moscow one may come upon a trolley-post decorated with a secretly printed bill demanding that Saturday, rather than Sunday, be declared the day of rest, and signed by "a group of Jewish leaders." Anti-Semitism crops up in the most unlikely places, such as the Communist Party and the Communist Union of Youth, that is, among young people

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who have grown up under the new dispensation and have presumably been imbued with ideas diametrically opposed to racial antagonisms. It appears that the latter body had harbored a secret group dedicated to the cause of combating the influence of the Jews, and calling itself "The Russian National Union"—a name having a familiar, old regime ring.[17] The Tula Provincial Committee of the Party recently thought it necessary to issue a special instruction on how to curb the growing menace of anti-Semitism, "a petty-bourgeois attitude," and "a most subtle form of agitation against the Soviet Power." [18] The fact that a warning was issued against exploiting anti-Jewish sentiment in the factional struggle that is raging within the Party is also significant. At the conference of the White Russian Communist Party in December, 1927, it was frankly admitted that the anti-Jewish feeling was growing among the working people throughout the country. "During the whole period of the revolution," wrote a leading Moscow Journalist last year, "anti-Semitism did not make such inroads in the [Communist] Party as at present." [19]

In the regions where the Jews are settled on the land, the local population, feeling itself cheated out of potential possession, naturally looks with a jaundiced eye upon the newcomers. The animosity against the Jews is strongest among the well-to-do Ukrainian peasants and the German colonists whose prospects of enlarging their holdings are most directly affected. The settlers accept the situation with equanimity: it is by no means new to them. The matter has no edge of actuality for them. They go about fearlessly and with a sense of security. To a degree they have succeeded in establishing friendly relations with their non-Jewish neighbors.

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As a Jewish woman observed to an American journalist: where Jew and Gentile look to the same sky for rain, prejudice is not likely to be strong.[20]

Indeed, there is no lack of signs pointing to a new spirit of tolerance and good will. Ten percent of the membership of the Ozet is made up of non-Jews, some of them Cossacks. If we are to believe the chairman of the Kalinindorf regional soviet, the native peasantry there is satisfied with the Jewish administration, and there is harmony between the Jewish majority and the Ukrainian minority. The fact that the Jews are taking up farming and entering the factories and mills in considerable numbers robs of its point the old argument that the race is a parasitic element always slipping out of heavy honest work. Another factor that tends to break down popular prejudice is the attitude of the Government. The Jews are treated by the State as citizens on a par with the rest of the community, and such discriminations as are made are not made on the basis of nationality. Indeed, no Government is doing so much to combat the more patent forms of anti-Semitism as is the Soviet Government. Anti-Jewish propaganda is regarded as criminal, and its perpetrators are severely punished. All things considered, it is undeniable that the Jews at last begin to feel that they have firm ground under their feet in a country which they can call their own.

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CHAPTER X

CULTURAL ASPECTS

THE new regime laid violent hands upon the economic foundations of Jewish existence, and changed the face of its group life. The cultural pattern could not but be effected, although, being more stable, it altered to a lesser degree. Among the Jews, as among other groups, the great social dislocation played havoc with religious institutions and made for a decline of devotional observance. The revolution, brushing aside venerable tabus, tearing holes in outworn customs, and sowing the seeds of new values, accelerated the decay of old-world traditions that had started before the war.

The case of the Jewish community of *Homel* (White Russia), which was investigated in 1924, is typical. The city was once a seat of Hasidism, with some thirty synagogues, a *yeshiva* (theological seminary), and many *cheders* (elementary religious schools). The revolution did not reach the town until the year 1919. Thereupon, the synagogues became empty, the yeshiva lost financial support, and the students dispersed, some of them entering the Communist Union of Youth and the Party. Rowdy lads, fired with atheist zeal, disturbed the faithful at their prayers, made public mock of the ritual, parodied the Passover service. The aged groaned and expected the end of the world. When the city fell a prey to banditry, many were moved to repentance, but the contrite spirit did not survive the period of trials. In 1922 the authorities, intent on secularizing the

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schools, closed down the cheders, and a group of rabbis were arrested and publicly tried for opposing the Government in the matter. Not a few of the prayer-houses, including the ancient central synagogue presented to the community by Count Rumiantzov, the great magnate of the early nineteenth century who had owned the town, were requisitioned and put to secular uses. Some became clubs, others were remodelled to accommodate Soviet offices, and a large one was turned into a shoe factory. The very eve of the Sabbath found some prayer-houses without the requisite quorum of ten men.

Events during the early years took the same general course, not only in the cities, but in forlorn townlets like Sirotino, and old agricultural colonies like Novozlatopol. The synagogue square remained the community's meeting place, but the sacred structures had a deserted look. The study of the Torah fell upon evil days, since the religious schools had collapsed, and the rabbinate, largely shorn of its prestige, had been forced to turn to lay pursuits to eke out a living. Complaints were heard that all the venerable ordinances and regulations were being violated, that Judaism was sinking. The reception rooms of the Hasidic holy men were empty, and their arbitrament was not sought. Sons no longer said *kadesh* (memorial prayer) over their deceased parents. Young and old profaned the Sabbath by smoking, and went to work on the holy day. On a Friday night one could see a man eating the forbidden flesh of the pig at a table lit by the traditional candles and decorated with the tall Sabbath loaf. On Passover leavened bread was eaten. Except for circumcision and the marriage rites, all observances seemed to have fallen into abeyance.

In the agricultural settlements, where the Jews live

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by themselves and where the assimilationist influences are less operative than elsewhere, the nature of the work tends to break down the old ways of living. These are suited to the artisan's or the shopkeeper's occupation, but not to that of the farmer. Saturday is the day of rest, when even the local Soviet offices are closed, but the day is no longer observed with the old rigor. One finds a pious Jewish woman lighting the candles on a Sabbath eve and then going out, in violation of the sanctity of the hour, to milk the cow. A visitor to the colonies told the story of how one Sabbath morning, while a heavy rain was coming down, "a number of the older men gathered in a large hut, an improvised synagogue, and were saying and singing their prayers with great gusto and zeal. Suddenly, in the midst of their prayers, the rain stopped, all at once, as it often does on the steppe. Through the last drops of rain the hot clear rays of the sun were shining. The worshippers one and all took off their praying shawls and rushed out on the steppe to gather in the hay that had been exposed to the rain for several hours.[2]

From the first, the Jewish Bolsheviks, in furtherance of the anti-religious program of the Communist Party, adopted a violently negative policy toward Judaism as a creed. While their Russian confreres assault a peasant heaven, they declare war on the God of the Ghettos, in the name of materialism and science. The prescriptions of Mosaic law are disregarded. Thoroughgoing Jewish Communists do not circumcise their male children. In a public debate held in Odessa the Communist spokesman maintained that the practice was a barbaric survival and should be abandoned.

The so-called anti-religious propaganda was soon under way. On the awful Day of Atonement, when even the fish, as the phrase goes, tremble in the sea, a group of

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young people would appear on the synagogue square with a brass band and make speeches denouncing the rabbis and Jehovah. At the initiative of the Communist Union of Youth, mock *seders** would be celebrated, at which a parody of the Passover *hagada*† would be recited. Where the traditional text reads: "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal, our God, brought us forth from thence with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and if the most Holy, blessed be He, had not brought forth our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and our children's children had still continued in bondage to the Pharaoh in Egypt," the parody might read: "We were slaves of Capital, until October came, and led us out of the land of exploitation with a strong hand, and if it were not for October, we and our children would still be slaves." For the exclamation "Next year in Jerusalem!" was substituted "This year a revolution here; next year—a world revolution!" [3]

The ragged banner of Orthodoxy was not without its defenders, however, even in the most difficult years. As early as the end of 1922 the rabbis held a convention which appointed a permanent committee to look after the interests of the faith. In the spring of 1925 a seminary was opened in the town of Nevel, in the former province of Vitebsk, for the training of ministers and ritual slaughterers. A year and a half later it had fifty-nine students and was refusing more for want of funds. There is a shortage of rabbis, and one of the tasks of the committee is to supply ministers where they are wanted, especially to the new settlements. It also sends out visiting preachers, aids in the repairing of the ritual bath-houses, and publishes Bibles and prayer-

* The term used to denote the home service on the first (and second) night of the Passover.

† The ritual for Passover eve.

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books, which are scarce. The second convention, which took place in 1926, elected a group of three to represent the faithful before the Jewry of other lands. The plans of the rabinical committee for 1927-28 call for the expenditure of nearly half a million rubles (partly American money) for the support of enough cheders to accommodate 8,750 pupils, of eight yeshivas for the study of the Talmud, two seminaries, courses for young people, and evening courses for adults. Another item in the budget is "religious propaganda": modern methods have penetrated into the very stronghold of conservatism.[4]

According to a recent report of the committee, it maintains relations with some four hundred congregations. The old kehillahs, which ministered to the spiritual needs of the communities, did not survive the revolution, but their place did not long remain vacant. The first conference of the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party, in 1918, declared that the kehillahs had "no place in Jewish life any longer." Less than a year later, in June, 1919, the central Jewish Commissariat formally abolished both the local kehillahs and their Central Bureau on the grounds that they were a nest of the reactionary bourgeois and clerical elements, and also because they did not limit themselves to religious matters.[5] Several years pass and we find the Jewish religious communities reconstituted on a new basis afforded by Soviet legislation. This recognizes "groups of believers" with a minimum membership of twenty and "religious societies" with a minimum membership of fifty (Decree of April 15, 1923).[6] They have the use of prayer-houses (which have been nationalized) and ritual objects, may elect officers, appoint ministers, hold conventions, collect voluntary contributions for the maintenance of the buildings used, but they do not

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constitute a juridical person, cannot own property, enter into contracts, or engage in business operations. They must register with the local Soviet, paying a rather high fee for the privilege, and the "religious societies must also file with the authorities a set of by-laws. By September 1, 1926, there were in the Ukraine 1,003 registered Jewish congregations, with 137,000 members,[7] and in the R. S. F. S. R. there were 418 congregations on October first of the previous year.[8] The latter figure takes on significance when one considers that while the Jews constitute only about one-half of one percent of the population of the R. S. F. S. R., the Jewish congregations are one and two-tenths percent of all the religious associations in that republic.[9]

Congregations are required to confine their activities to purely religious matters. But where is the line to be drawn in the case of the orthodox Jewish faith, which, more exensively than other creeds, affects daily living? Fearing the influence of the clerical element, the authorities bar it from meddling with the education of the young, and the care of the aged, sick, and needy, insisting that this is the business of the proletarian State, and not of any private body, especially one hostile to the regime. The new kehillahs, on their part, are inclined to slip back into the old ways and tread on forbidden ground. The Communists point with scorn and alarm to the fact that in some townlets the separate congregations combine and seek to revive the cheder and the yeshiva, and to establish a monopoly on yeast and candles and lay a tax on ritually slaughtered meat, thus virtually reviving the old "basket-tax." In one case the heads of the synagogue so far ignored the restrictions on religious bodies as to run a *matzoth* bakery. Scandalous to relate, the moneys collected are spent not only for such legitimate purposes as the repair of prayer-

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houses and *mikvahs* (ritual bath-houses), but also to support homes for the aged, and to assist other social service work. It is said that in Moscow, where orthodoxy is strong, there is even an underground credit society which issues small loans to kustars and other needy persons, in the manner of the old *gmilath-khesed* (charity loan).

A congress of the Jewish religious associations was scheduled for the fall of 1927, but was postponed. One of its aims was to restore the Central Bureau which had been abolished at the beginning of the revolution. Not that there is complete unanimity among the faithful. Some congregations show a reform tendency. In Homel the members of one synagogue resolved to remove the curtain from the women's gallery, and for hygienic reasons to refrain from kissing the Torah. Yet modernism seems to be feeble and orthodoxy well able to hold its own. Indeed, according to the Communists, it is strong and growing more so. They will have it that the clericals are taking the offensive and are winning over even the youth. They cite with dismay the fact that the attendance of the synagogues by the young people is on the increase, that Hasidic prayer meetings are being held in the very shadow of the Red Kremlin, and that in the city of Lenin on the high holidays the revered Tzaddik of Libavichi holds grand receptions to which hundreds of the faithful flock from all over the country. Accordingly, they urge a renewed attack upon religion. This time it is to be chiefly a campaign of enlightenment, under the direction of specially trained propagandists, who will use civilized methods.

In their fight against the influence of the synagogue and all it stands for, the Communists found more effective means than the jeers and arguments of so-called "anti-religious propaganda." They secularized the

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schools. A father may teach his son the tenets of the faith, or he may hire a tutor for the purpose, and indeed as many as three children may be taught thus in a home atmosphere, without infringement of the law. Not, however, until boys and girls reach the age of eighteen—the age of discretion—are they allowed to receive religious instruction in schools organized, privately, of course, for that purpose. This prohibition means not only that the Jewish creed is not taught in the schools. It means also a ban on the Scriptures and on the language of the Scriptures. Since Hebrew is an intrinsic element of the Yiddish tongue, it is tolerated as a graduate subject, but it is otherwise proscribed as an engine of obscurantism, a well of chauvinistic corruption, a vehicle of insidious counter-revolution. The language of the new Jewish culture is the spoken idiom of the masses, while Hebrew and all things Hebraic are frowned upon and in every way discouraged.*

The educational program sponsored by the Communists and carried out by the Government spelled the downfall of that pillar of Jewish life: the cheder. And indeed the authorities resolutely set about the business of abolishing the ancient institution. In this matter the Jewish Communists were not content to use the arm of the State. They appealed to public opinion and tried to impress the people with the fact that these schools were injurious to the minds and bodies of the children. To that end they staged public trials of the cheder. One such performance, which took place in Vitebsk in January, 1921, was reported in full detail.[10] This trial was based on an investigation of thirty-nine of these schools, accommodating 1,358 pupils. They were found to be as objectionable as they had always been: veritable pig-

* The Yiddish spelling reform involving the phonetic transcription of Hebrew words was adopted in 1920 at the first Jewish Educational Congress.

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sties in which the boys spent unconscionably long hours under masters ignorant of the rudiments of pedagogy. The verdict emphatically condemned them as tending to produce a generation of mentally weak and spiritless human beings, in short, as representing counter-revolution in education. A number of cheders, however, still exist, if on a half-illegal footing, particularly in the more backward communities.

The cheders have been largely replaced by Government schools. These are wholly secular and permeated with the spirit of the new order. Since there are not enough of them to go around, perhaps half of the Jewish children get no book-learning. One of the basic principles of Soviet education is that teaching should be done in the language that comes naturally to the pupils. Where Yiddish is the mother-tongue of the group, the effort is to make it the language of instruction. To what extent the effort has been successful may be seen from the following figures. At the end of the school year 1926-27 there were over 1,400 schools, including both elementary and high-school grades, in White Russia, the Ukraine and the R. S. F. S. R. They accommodated over 118,000 pupils. Nearly half of all the Jewish children in White Russia and the Ukraine who get any schooling, and about one-fourth of that group in the R. S. F. S. R., have all their classes in Yiddish.[11] The rest go to Russian, Ukrainian or White Russian schools. Yiddish is also the language used in ten percent of the 550 children's homes and in sixteen percent of the kindergartens in the Ukraine.[12] The Jewish schools are attended by the children of the poor, the well-to-do preferring to send their young to the other schools. It must be borne in mind that the Yiddish schools form an integral part of the Soviet educational system, and are wholly supported, zealously watched and controlled by

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the State. There is a central Jewish Bureau in the Commissariat of Education, and Jewish inspectors in the local bureaus.

The Jewish educational system includes also several trade, factory and agricultural schools, and hundreds of classes for teaching reading and writing to adults,* and for instruction in Communist Civics. Eight normal schools, with an enrollment of 1,500, train Yiddish teachers.[13] Yet competent pedagogues with a mastery of the vernacular are still scarce. The study of Russian is obligatory in the Yiddish schools of the R. S. F. S. R. alone. In the Ukraine and in White Russia the second required language is, respectively, Ukrainian and White Russian. In these two republics there is a vexing language problem. The children have to be taught two languages in addition to Yiddish, if they are to know both the local tongue and the lingua franca of the country; Russian, and three languages, if they are also to be able to use a Western tongue. There are several Jewish preparatory schools attached to higher institutions of learning, and Jewish departments in the Universities of Minsk and Odessa and in the Second University of Moscow. There is also an agricultural school in one of the settlements (Novo-Poltavka) and a Jewish Chair at the White Russian Agricultural Institute at Gorki, for the training of agronomists. Party members preparing themselves for work among the Jews get preliminary instruction at special Party schools and pursue their graduate studies in the Jewish section of the Communist University for the Peoples of the West.

The apparatus for the dissemination of knowledge among the Yiddish-speaking masses includes a consider-

* "*Likpunkty*," i.e. classes for the liquidation of illiteracy. The census of 1926 revealed that the percentage of literacy among the Jews in the Ukraine was 65 percent, while among the Ukrainians proper it was only 28 percent. (*Izvestia*, Moscow, July 1, 1927.)

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able number of lending libraries and reading rooms. Before the war there were about 300 Jewish libraries throughout the empire.[14] During the early years of the revolution most of them shut their doors. At present, however, there are probably more libraries than in the old days, and the number of Jewish books in circulation has certainly increased. The largest collection is the Central Jewish State Library of Kiev, which bears the name of Morris Winchewsky, the Russian-American poet and publicist who is the father of Socialist literature in Yiddish. The tenth anniversary of the revolution was marked by the opening at Odessa of a State Museum of Jewish culture named for "grandfather" Mendele Mocher Sforim.

Crowning this educational edifice are several research agencies. The Jewish Section of the Institute of White Russian Culture came into being in 1925, and has already set up several commissions of inquiry into matters of literary, historical and linguistic interest. Work has been begun on an academic dictionary of Yiddish, and the elaboration of terminology is being pushed forward. Among the Institute's publications are lists of the terms used in law and mathematics, and others covering such fields as administration, agronomy, physics, are in preparation. Similar work is being done under the auspices of the Chair of Jewish Culture at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences at Kiev. Plans are being laid for the establishment of a central institute which would coordinate the work done in Minsk and in Kiev. These modest beginnings are looked upon by some enthusiasts as the seed of an unprecedented type of Jewish learning. It will not be narrowly racial, pietistic, and retrospective, but rather encyclopedic in scope, practical in outlook, and frankly serving the interests of the new dispensation. It may be added that

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the Jewish Historico-Ethnographic Society of Leningrad (founded in 1908), under a new charter, continues to function, though feebly.

The new schools need new text-books. The demand is met by both official and semi-official publishing agencies. The most important of these are the Kultur Liga, and the "School and Book" Corporation, but the State Publishing Board of the Ukraine and the Central Publishing Board of Nationalities which is situated in Moscow, are also instrumental in getting Yiddish books before the people. A juvenile literature is growing up, and there are also manuals of practical instruction for adults as well as many socio-political pamphlets. Imaginative literature, aside from translations, plays a relatively small part. In 1925 almost as many Yiddish titles were published in the Union as in all the other countries taken together.[15] The following year there were 227 Yiddish titles published, and during 1927 the number reached 294.[16] True, the books may be called such only by courtesy, as many are mere brochures. By 1927 there were six Yiddish dailies in the Union, and periodicals were not lacking. One of the several weeklies is gotten out for the settlers by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine. The monthlies include an educational journal and a general review, *The Red World,* which is issued by the Ukrainian State Publishing Board.

Communist leadership would rejoice to see the synagogues replaced by modern schools, by factories, and—by theatres. From the first, the authorities have given every encouragement to dramatic art, partly in the hope that the play-houses would take the place of the prayer-houses. The Jewish stage, which, under the old regime, had dragged out a mean, anaemic, threatened existence, gained health with the new era, and in spite of all man-

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ner of obstacles, developed into a living art. In 1919, in starving Petrograd, a group of Jewish actors came together, under the vigorous direction of A. M. Granovsky, and established a repertory company. It was housed in what had been the theatre of Suvorin, a friend of Chekhov's and a notorious Jew-baiter. Some wag bandaged the eyes of Suvorin's bust, lest he see the ignominy that has befallen his play-house. Shortly afterward it moved to Moscow, which held a sufficiently large Jewish contingent to support the venture. Here it was incorporated into the system of Government-supported theatres, and became the Jewish State Theatre, better known as the Jewish Kamerny (chamber, that is, intimate) Theatre. It is in the very van of theatrical progress. Like other stages that express the spirit of the revolution, it aims at disturbing, rather than soothing, the audience. It has a predilection for the grotesque and holds up to Jewish life the distorting mirror of caricature. Not that it confines itself to racial subjects. An early production was Maeterlinck's *The Blind*, and the plans for the season of 1927-28 include a drama dealing with the uprising of colored slaves in an English colony. This is one sign of the shift from the old, introverted, self-conscious attitude to a healthier, more outward-looking point of view. True, the theatre still leans heavily on the older repertoire, freely adapted and interpreted, since the drama lags behind the other stage arts. But whether a harlequinade based on the traditional *Purimspiel* or a foreign piece is presented, the performance is plainly rooted in and informed by the Jewish spirit and the Jewish inheritance.[17]

The Ukraine, too, has more recently achieved a Jewish State Theatre, which divides its season between Kharkov, the capital, and Odessa. Like the Moscow group, it seeks to act as the mouthpiece of the new era,

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and in a large sense to be an instrument of Communist education. It is intent on carving out its own way, but is still in the experimental stage.[18] Jewish theatres also flourish in Kiev, and in Minsk, the latter under the auspices of the White Russian Republic, and indeed there is scarcely a Jewish settlement without some little play-house, even if it is a mere barn, where weekly or fortnightly performances are given. The program of every club includes dramatics. In 1927 the group in the Moscow Workers' Club gave a playlet based on the life of the Jewish settlers. For a good many years a company of Jewish actors, established in Moscow under the name of *Habimah* (Hebrew for stage), gave performances not in the vernacular, but in the language of the prophets. The story of the Habimah, which goes back to 1912, is one of a confraternity of artists dedicated to an ideal at once æsthetic and national in a spirit that can only be described as religious. They had to fight not only the indifference of a callous public, but also the hostility of a Government which holds Hebrew suspect as the language of fanaticism and reaction. Perhaps by way of a temporary retreat, they have recently withdrawn from the land of the Soviets and split into two groups, one of which established itself temporarily in New York.

The stage has the support of some of the best workers in music and painting. So far these arts, unlike that of the theatre, have failed to be quickened by the revolution. Before the upheaval there were several gifted painters whose work was fed by Jewish experience, and was also, in varying degrees, the expression of it. One thinks of Chagall, Altman, Lisitzky. The revolution drew some of these men away from Jewish themes, but this seems to have been only a temporary diversion. A telling symptom is the recent interest in traditional

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folk-art, such as mural ornament in synagogues, book decoration, and the like. As Jewish culture gains strength, the arts are bound to assert themselves.

Literature shows considerable vitality. Needless to say, Yiddish is its medium, neo-Hebrew literature being virtually extinct. The speech of the masses is undergoing far-reaching changes. The "jargon," the low dialect, has achieved the status of an official tongue. A vernacular, once confined to the intimacies of the home and the crudities of the market-place, it is now being employed in the Government office and the law court. Upon the free, expansive, picturesque language of old wives' tales, of melodrama, of genre comedy, an unwonted discipline is imposed: it has to adapt itself to the precise requirements of instruction and even of scholarly research. The forced growth of the language involves the hasty assimilation of Russian phrasing, which Yiddish will probably disgorge in the end. Yet the expansion of the scope of the language, and the new dignity it has taken on, cannot but benefit imaginative writing.

In the beginning a host of verse writers arose to celebrate the revolution. At least two personalities have emerged from this crowd: Itzik Fefer and Izzi Kharik. *The Bogs of Minsk,* a long narrative poem by the last-named, has been pronounced the greatest achievement in Jewish verse of recent years. The simplicity, the affirming spirit, the joyous mood of their work are in contrast to the cerebral, negative quality and the minor tone that prevailed before the revolution, and are, indeed, the hallmark of the new poetry. As time went on, prose came to the fore, partly in response to the demand of the critics that the young men cease writing ebullient lyrics and devote themselves to realistic, if partisan, portrayals of daily life. Much of the output

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is merely poor imitation of current Russian fiction, yet I. Kipnis' *Months and Days* has received high commendation as a piece executed in a fresh and buoyant manner. Like their Russian confreres, some of the Jewish writers are organized for the purpose not only of protecting their interests and improving their work, but also in order to serve the proletarian public by means of readings, lectures, and the like. The State offers a subsidy of fifty rubles a month to a few chosen authors.

The social landslide was far less destructive to Jewish literature than it was to Russian, since the Yiddish authors had always written not for the doomed middle class, but for the common people. For the same reason, the inheritance from the literary past has for the most part been accepted by the younger generation of writers. The older men are accorded homage, steadily reprinted and zealously studied. The Jewish Section of the Institute of White Russian Culture, for example, is preparing an edition of Mendele Mocher Sforim on a most ambitious scale. The fact that Yiddish literature has always been a literature of the poor, the untutored, the lowly, inclines the Communists to be respectful to the earliest Jewish authors. But although the past is reverenced, there is a strong feeling that literature, together with the other arts, stands on the threshold of a new era.

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CHAPTER XI

LOOKING AHEAD

ANY speculation as to what the future holds for the Jewish people inevitably revolves around the Hamletic query: to be or not to be? Are the Jews of the Soviet empire on their way to assimilation, or not? Setting aside ultimate destinies and taking a short view of the question, it is possible to attempt an answer without leaving the sober factual plane upon which this study has so far been conducted.

It might appear that the new order has strengthened some old, and brought into play some new forces hostile to the preservation of the Jewish group identity. In weakening the religious regime which for so long walled in the masses and buttressed their separatism, the revolution has laid them open to the disintegrating influences which always threaten a minority. Yet the vitality of the religious tradition should not be underestimated, and in any event, its decay is likely to be a slow, interrupted affair. Again, it is argued, the removal of the residential disability should lead to a gradual abandonment of the old congested centers, and an eventual absorption by the Russian sea of the drop that is Jewry. Indeed, as has been seen, some movement of the population from the Pale into the interior has already taken place. New backgrounds, new interests, new occupations, are likely to make for the acceptance of new standards. It is conceivable that the isolated communities in such places as the Volga cities may become submerged within a few

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generations. It is, however, unreasonable to expect that the bulk of the Jewish people will pull up stakes and scatter all over the country, thus courting assimilation. Economic and social factors make for a cohesion within the race which renders such an eventuality an uncertain and remote possibility.

The emphasis, laid by the new dispensation, on class rather than national differences, has until now not been as efficacious in breaking down the division between Jew and gentile as might be supposed. The revolution did foster the spirit of brotherhood, but could not long sustain it, and where the civil war was fought anti-Jewish feeling raged with unprecedented violence. This feeling has since lost its edge, and has taken on the shape that anti-Semitism assumes in the west. On the whole, the traffic with gentiles has probably increased, particularly among the young people. According to the last census, 712,000 persons designating themselves as Jews named languages other than Yiddish as their mother-tongue. Thus, twenty-seven percent of the Jews of the Union have undergone linguistic assimilation. The percentage is high, but does not exceed that of the White Russians in the same position.[1] There is talk of a growing number of mixed marriages, and of a more tolerant attitude toward them, but in 1924 fully ninety-six percent of the Jewish males married within their race,[2] a proportion that has probably not altered much in the subsequent years.

The truth is that under the new regime the influences working against Jewish distinctiveness are counterbalanced and indeed outweighed by influences working in the opposite direction. It has been pointed out that the emancipation of the formerly subject nationalities is a basic principle of the new order. Every ethnic group is not only permitted, but encouraged, to lead its own

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life, and to develop whatever cultural potentialities it may possess, provided, of course, that the Communist scheme of things is not interfered with. An air so favorable to all minor, local civilizations is a healthy one for Jewish nationalism. The logic of the situation at present makes for separatism. The Jews are concentrated in the Ukraine and in White Russia, where the dominant races are jealous of their newly discovered national identity. Consequently, the adoption of the elements of Russian culture, which is what Jewish assimilation would mean at present, would, to put it mildly, rub the natives the wrong way. The only reasonable, politic, dignified stand for the Jews to take is that they are a separate and distinct cultural entity.

Assimilation is frowned upon on all sides. Even the Communists, while vehemently rejecting anything that smacks of a nationalist policy, are working, as stated elsewhere, toward the consolidation of the Jewish nationality. True, Marx denied that the term *nation* could properly be applied to Jewry, and Lenin, who agreed with him, believed that the race would disappear in a free Russia, a contingency that in no way disturbed him. There are some Communists of Jewish birth who, sharing these views, would be content to see their people swallowed up. The Jews, runs the argument, not being a nation in the strict Marxian sense, are not the object of the Soviet national policy. On the other hand, there are those who would preserve the group at all costs. The official policy of the Party holds to neither point of view. It subordinates the whole issue to the consideration of what will best serve the interests of the new order. It would encourage the Jews to enter the mines and the factories, and if that means that they are to be lost in an alien environment, no matter. At the same time, the assimilationist program is definitely rejected.

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"The greatest danger to our revolutionary socialist work," said a prominent leader at the seventh All-Union Conference of the Jewish Sections of the Young Communist Leagues, "would be to break away from the masses, and that is what assimilation would lead to." [3] The Bolsheviks doubt the reality of a Jewish nation on a world scale, feeling that it cannot include such heterogeneous elements as the congregation of the old synagogue at Wilno, and that of the Temple Emanuel in New York City, the Daghestan mountaineers and the descendants of those Israelites who sat for Rembrandt. But they believe that under the wing of the proletarian dictatorship that portion of the race that lives within the borders of the Union may achieve the status of a national entity with a territorial basis. As has already been indicated, such a consolidation they believe to be useful to the Cause and therefore desirable.

Hence the demand for an autonomous territory in the program of the Jewish sections of the Communist Party. Hence, by the same token, the energetic support of the land movement, considered as a long step toward the goal. On November 17, 1926, Kalinin, President of the Union, made a speech at the Moscow conference of the Ozet, a non-partisan organization. Economic necessity, he allowed, impelled the movement to the land. But there was back of it, he said, "a powerful, unconscious mass phenomenon"— a will on the part of the Jewish masses to preserve their national identity. Only if hundreds of thousands of Jews come to make up a Jewish peasantry, he argued, can the people continue to be, as they should, a distinct nation. So that, when the townsman settles on the land, he is the bearer of a "national mission." [4] His words were received with applause. The temper of the masses may be judged from the following incident. At a conference of the

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Jewish Communist Sections a resolution was offered which indicated the possibility of assimilation for the communities outside of the main Jewish centers. It was objected to on the ground that it was a tactless move and one that would offend the people.

The Jewish Soviet Republic envisaged by the orthodox Communists differs fundamentally from Herzl's polity in Zion, as well as from the Territorialists' homeland. It is not intended to furnish the Jewish race throughout the world with the political life that it has lacked for so long. Nor is it intended to become the seat of the putative civilization of the race. It contributes little to the solution of the Jewish problem on a world scale, but within its local scope it would afford Russian Jewry a basis for a full national life. The Jewish republic is a matter of the future. For the present, the State extends to the Jewish masses what it offers to the other minorities: Government institutions using their own language, and instruction entirely in their own tongue. In spite of the fact that everything relating to religion is excluded from the schools, the children who pass through them are imbued with the Jewish spirit. The racial experience is transmitted to them through the medium of the Yiddish writers on whose works they are brought up, and whose language they use not only in the home but also in the classroom.

Unless all signs fail, the future will witness the rise of a distinct Jewish culture on Russian soil. It is not likely to find a rival except perhaps in the Palestinian center which is now forming. The present hostility on the part of Soviet Jewish leadership toward Hebrew and all it stands for is probably a passing phase, and the ancient tongue, which is, after all, an integral part of Yiddish, may in the end find its place in the Jewish scheme of things. As a matter of fact, February, 1928,

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witnessed the appearance of a rabbinical periodical in Hebrew under the imprint of a Communist firm in Moscow. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the years will widen the distance between the two nodes of Jewish life: one, Oriental, exclusively Hebraic, steeped in an essentially religious tradition, probably conservative; the other, aggressive, eclectic, secular, speaking a plebeian language born in the western diaspora. Whether this will mean an irreparable schism, so that all those to whom their racial heritage is a living thing will gravitate to one of the two poles, Jerusalem or Moscow, or whether the two polities will complement each other, must remain a matter for speculation.

In concluding, it may be pertinent to contrast the effect of the Russian upheaval upon Jewry with that of the other great crisis which occurred in western Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. The government set up by the French revolution accorded the Jews full civic rights. But they were emancipated not as a peculiar extra-territorial nationality, entitled to a group life of its own, but rather as citizens of France who professed a strange faith. Curiously enough, this view of the nature of Judaism struck root and flourished among the Jews of the West. The Grand Synhedrion convoked by Napoleon decreed flatly that the Jews did not constitute a nation. It is perhaps too early to judge the results of the Russian revolution, but it would seem that its chief effect upon the Jewish people within its sphere of influence is to have freed them not merely as individuals, but as a group having the potentialities of nationhood.

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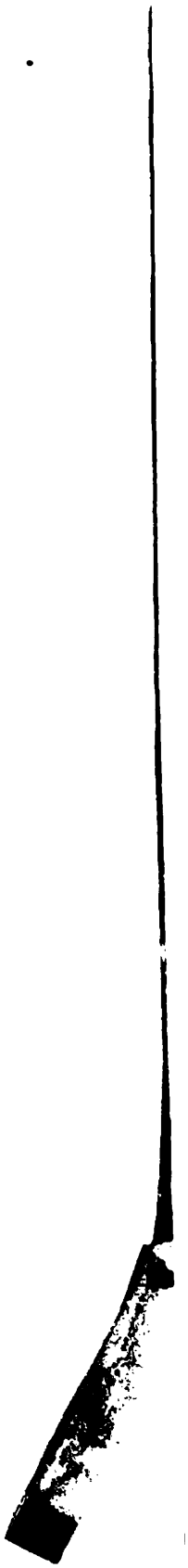

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PART II

OTHER MINOR NATIONALITIES

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CHAPTER XII

THE PEOPLES OF THE UNION

BEFORE attempting to examine the Soviet national policy as it works out in practise, it may be well to look more closely at the ethnic composition of the population. It is generally known that the inhabitants of pre-revolutionary Russia were not a homogeneous people, coming of the same stock and speaking one language. In fact, the vast Eurasian empire in the course of its expansion over one-sixth of the earth's land area came to include many races, professing different faiths, speaking a bewildering variety of tongues, and representing every level of culture. The census of 1897, taken over the entire country except Finland, registered 146 languages and dialects, and 104 nationalities.[1]

Russia emerged from the war and the revolution shorn of a large strip of its western territory, the home of the Finns, the Letts, the Esthonians, the Poles, and the Lithuanians; while Bessarabia, with its large Moldavian population, had been annexed by Roumania. As a result, the ethnographic map of the Soviet Union is less motley than that of the State which it supersedes, but remains nevertheless a thing of shreds and patches. A catalogue of the peoples of the Union, compiled by a commission of the Academy of Sciences of Leningrad and issued last year, lists 169 ethnic groups (*narodnosti*) speaking some 200 languages.[2] The census of December 17, 1926, established the presence of 182 ethnic groups in the Union, speaking 149 languages.[3] These figures

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must be taken with a grain of salt. A number of the peoples included are very small or half-submerged groups, and some of the languages recorded were classed as dialects in an age less careful of local distinctions than is the present era. Thirty nationalities form nearly ninety-eight percent of the population of the country.[4] To clarify the following pages, the more important of the peoples of the Soviet commonwealth must be at least mentioned, at the risk of turning this chapter into a tiresome catalogue.

Under the old regime the Russians proper formed a considerable majority of the population: 65 percent in 1897.[5] In those days the term covered not only the Great Russians, the dominant race, but also the Little Russians and the much less numerous White Russians. They were generally held to be closely related branches of the same people, and the vernaculars of the Little Russian and White Russian peasantry were considered mere local dialects of the official tongue: Russian. The revolution has changed all this. The entire political and cultural life of the Ukrainians, as the Little Russians prefer to call themselves, and of the White Russians, is based on the assumption that each possesses a distinct identity. The term Russian is at present practically synonymous with "Great Russian." In this latter sense it will be used throughout the subsequent discussion.

Because of the loss of the western territory, which was largely non-Russian, there are relatively more Russians in the Union than there had been in the empire. In 1897 they formed 43 percent of the population. In 1926 they constituted 53 percent, numbering 77,760,000.[6] If one were making an ethnic map and painting the Russian areas, appropriately enough, red, one would have practically a solid wash of red in the central and

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northern zone of the east European plain, where the race is indigenous. In places, particularly in the northeast and along the middle course of the Volga, the color would have to be laid on in patches. Then there would be red dots marking the urban centers of the south, a peppering of red in the Crimea, and lavish splotches of color in the northern Caucasus. Veins of red would trail thinly over the prairies of Turkestan, where Russian colonization is a recent thing and where the newcomers cling to the cities and the fertile oases. The color would show more generously on the immense Siberian expanse, across which hardy Cossacks and ploughmen from Great Russia have been pushing irresistibly for over three centuries.

The swarthy, short-headed, tall Ukrainians, who in 1926 numbered approximately 31,000,000,[7] are massed in the south of the European portion of the Union, and there are also considerable contingents of them along the middle reaches of the Volga, in the Caucasus, Siberia, and trans-Caspia. Except for occasional settlements of Czechs, Bulgarians, Germans and Greeks, the population of the Ukrainian countryside is ethnically quite uniform. It is in the cities that the native element finds itself outnumbered by Russians and Jews. Then, too, there is a scattering of Poles, and close to the Dniester a large group of Moldavians. On the western frontier, wedged in between the Russians and the Ukrainians, is the minor branch of eastern Slavdom: the fair-skinned, blue-eyed, long-headed White Russians, nearly 5,000,000 in all.[8] They straddle the watershed between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, occupying as they do the upper reaches of the Dnieper, the Niemen, and the Dvina. The native population is overwhelmingly rural. In the towns there are many Jews.

All along the western border of the Union there is an

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alien admixture: Finns, Esthonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Along the Finnish frontier there is the more or less compact mass of Karelian farmers and woodsmen. Toward the Urals one meets the semi-nomadic Syryenians, who now prefer to call themselves Komi, and the more numerous Votyak peasantry, who live farther south in the province of Vyatka. On the middle Volga are found the Mari, better known under the name of Cheremissians which is now held to be offensive, and the Mordvinian farmers, scattered over a large territory in such a manner as to be everywhere in the minority. Except the Letts and Lithuanians, all these peoples, as well as several lesser tribes, are probably of the same stock and speak related languages known as Finno-Ugrian. The Finno-Ugrians (who constitute 2.2 percent of the entire population)[9] are remnants of a people which was once master of the forests and fens of the north, but ultimately fell into the melting-pot out of which the Great Russian type emerged about the time of Ivan the Terrible.

These peoples are in a large measure assimilated. Their vernaculars have lost much ground to the Russian language, and their gods have been pushed into obscure corners by the Trinity and the saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The ethnic groups whose speech is Turkic and whose race is presumably the same have shown more resistance to the forces of disintegration. Their adherence to Islam may be partly responsible for the preservation of their racial identity. Considered as a whole, they are, next to the Slavs, numerically the most important element of the population (11.6 percent or 17,000,000).[10] The Academy's ethnic catalogue lists as many as forty-eight separate Turco-Tataric tribes.[11] Most of them are located on the periphery of the country and in its Asiatic section, on territory which was

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annexed by the empire at a comparatively recent date. Some, however, are to be found on territory historically Muscovite, forming, like the Finno-Ugrians, alien islands in a Russian sea. Such are the Chuvashes, chiefly in the provinces of Nizhni-Novogorod and Simbirsk, the Bashkirs in the southern Urals, and the so-called Volga Tatars, who give an Oriental touch to Kazan and to other cities on the great river as far south as Astrakhan, and who are also scattered through the rest of the country.

On the eastern bank of the Volga below Saratov one comes upon a group of farming settlements inhabited by the Germans who came to Russia at the invitation of Catherine the Great. They have clung to their language, customs and Lutheran faith. German colonists are also found in the Crimea, along with Russians, Tatars, Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians, to mention only a few of the fifteen peoples who are represented by no less than a thousand members in the population of the peninsula.[12]

It is in the Caucasus that the ethnic map assumes the aspect of a veritable crazy-quilt. These valleys and peaks are a Babel of tongues and races. Only in the north, where freemen from the Don and runaway serfs from Muscovy have been settling since the end of the sixteenth century, are the Russians, chiefly Cossacks, in the majority. In Transcaucasia the race of the conquerors is in the minority (under 5 percent).[13] The aboriginal population of the Caucasus consists, first of all, of forty peoples of so-called Japhetic stock.[14] Most of them are small, semi-civilized tribes of farmers and cattle-herders, professing Mahommedanism. The Orthodox Kartvels, as the Georgians call themselves, are the most numerous of southern Japhetides and have a number of tribal subdivisions. The best known west Caucasian people are the Adighe (Circassians), and the Che-

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chens are the largest central group, which includes also the Ingushes. The ethnic heterogeneity reaches its highest point in the eastern valleys and plateaus.

Then too there are the Christian Armenians, believed to be of mixed Japhetic and Indo-European origin, some ten tribes of Turkic stock, notably the Azerbaijan Turks, and several of Iranian origin, for example, the Ossetes. Jews, both natives who have been settled for many centuries, and recent comers, as well as Syrian immigrants, add a Semitic ingredient to the Caucasian salad. It must be borne in mind that hardly any part of the country is occupied by a racially homogeneous population. One ethnic group runs into the other and most of them are scattered and commingled. It is all the more remarkable that so many of these small groups have been able to maintain their separate individuality.

In the northeast, the foot-hills of the Caucasus merge into a grassland bounded by the lower Volga. Here hordes of tent-dwelling Kalmucks, people of Mongol stock and language and of Buddhist faith, graze their horses, cattle, sheep and camels. East of the Volga the steppe broadens out into the enormous wastes and prairies of Turkestan. The largest portion of it is dotted by the circular felt *yurtas* of another nomad race. The name Kirghiz, by which it has generally been known, is a misnomer and has now been replaced by the authentic historic appellation Kazak. The Kazaks, (not to be confused with the Cossacks, who are of Russian or Ukrainian stock), are, next to the Osmanlis, the largest of the Turkic peoples. Although they are so numerous and rove over a vast territory stretching from the Volga to the Chinese frontier and from the Irtysh to the Amu-Darya river, they have preserved their cultural and, more particularly, their linguistic unity. At present, the term Kirghiz is reserved for the kumyss-

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drinking mountain tribe often referred to as Kara-Kirghiz who live about the lake Issyk-Kul in the Tian-Shan.

South of the immense Kazak pastures lies, in Central Asia, the oldest cultural area of the Soviet Union, formerly divided into Trans-Caspia, Khiva, Bokhara, and the provinces of Syr-Darya, Samarkand, and Ferghana. The fertile oases of this waterless, subtropical region have been the seat of an advanced agricultural civilization since the beginning of history. At present, the aboriginal Iranian population, which predominated until the eleventh century, is represented only by the Mountain Tajiks, the neighbors of the Kara-Kirghiz in the Pamir, and by a few minor tribes who have preserved their Persian dialects and some of the physical and cultural features of their ancestors. The majority of the inhabitants are the result of a fusion between the natives and the Turko-Mongol invaders, the Turkic element prevailing. They are the Uzbeks, the dominant race of Central Asia, and the less numerous, half-nomadic Turcomans.

In Siberia, particularly in the western section, the Russian element is numerically very strong. The settlements follow in the main the line of the Trans-Siberian, and are thickest in the southern zone, along the upper reaches of the Irtysh and the Ob. The aborigines here are represented by the Samoyeds of the arctic tundra, the Voguls and Ostyaks, two small Finno-Ugrian tribes of primitive trappers and fishermen, and, in the south, by several Turkic tribes, notably the Altaians (Mountain Kalmucks) of the Altai Mountains, a nomad tribe which after the revolution took the name of Oirats. Farther east the Russian population grows scarce. It forms thin streaks along those mighty rivers, the Yenisei and the Lena, as well as along the Mongolian and Man-

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churian frontiers, but swells out again in the Amur region and in the Maritime Province on the Pacific, which, indeed, are almost wholly Russian. The Chinese who live in the Russian Far East have retained their old allegiance, but nearly one-half of the 75,000 Koreans who settled in the Amur Region and in the Maritime Province in the middle of the nineteenth century have adopted Soviet citizenship. Isolated Russian settlements have secured a footing in the extreme north-east, as far as the mouth of the Kolyma, and at Kamchatka and Sakhalin.

The endless and largely unexplored stretches of eastern Siberia are essentially the land of the energetic, capable Yakuts, a people of Turkic race who were driven north in the age of Jenghiz Khan but who preserved in their new surroundings all the elements of their civilization except their Shamanist religion. Their language, indeed, is competing with Russian for the role of the lingua franca of the region. There are also slight remnants of other Turkic tribes, and about Lake Baikal, in relatively compact masses, the Buryats of Mongol stock and Buddhist faith. Several more assimilable peoples of Tunguse stock range the primeval forests from the Yenisei to the Pacific coast. Most of these tribes are nominally Orthodox Christians, but actually Shamanists, and they live on a level of primitive economy. Least civilized of all are the so-called Paleo-Asiatic tribes of the extreme north-east and of Sakhalin, some of them just emerging from the stone age.

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CHAPTER XIII

SELF-DETERMINATION

"THE Russian Soviet Republic is being founded on the basis of a free union of free peoples as a federation of Soviet national republics." [1] This statement is part of the Declaration of the Rights of Working and Exploited People issued by the first congress of Soviets that met after the Bolsheviks had seized power. The document was incorporated into the constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, when that was promulgated six months later.[2] In the most recent version of the fundamental law the clause quoted above is worded thus: "The Russian Republic is a socialist state of workers and peasants, which is being built on the basis of a federation of national Soviet republics." [3] Indeed, the conception of the Soviet polity as a voluntary alliance of peoples, each possessing a more or less autonomous political organization, is a basic principle of Soviet statecraft. It must be remembered, however, that in the Communist scheme of things a "people" is synonymous with its working classes, and that these alone truly express the national will.

The smoldering spirit of separatism which the Provisional Government had vainly tried to quench was fanned into flame by the October revolution. Lenin was wrong in believing that the minor nationalities, finding the gates open for them to go their own ways, would refrain from taking advantage of the unprecedented opportunity. As a matter of fact, the ink was

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still wet on the Declaration of the Rights of Peoples when one after another the former subject peoples began to drop away. Finland, Poland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and even White Russia, where the nationalist movement was relatively feeble, broke the tie that had united them with Russia. Nor was it only in the west that the country was falling apart. The Ukraine, too, withdrew, and so did the Crimea, and Transcaucasia. At Kazan a separate Tatar State was proclaimed, and the Kazak herdsmen of the Turkestan prairies declared themselves independent. The Central Asiatic provinces were cut off from Moscow by the White forces.

The Soviet Government viewed this disintegration with alarm. Economically, as well as strategically speaking, the seceded regions held key positions. The country depended on the south for petroleum, iron, coal, wheat and sugar. It was clear that without those provinces, the north, in which the revolution was intrenched, "would be a motherless calf, bleating about, and die of mange and starvation," to use words applied in 1861 to the northern section of the United States. Besides, nearly everywhere the secessionist movement was actuated by hostility to the Soviet regime rather than by the will to achieve a separate political existence, and was indeed a phase of the civil war which rent the quondam empire. Small wonder then that the Bolshevik government was not content to play the part of onlooker in the bitter conflict which flared up in the peripheral regions between the opposing local factions. Moscow helped the cause wherever it needed help, and on occasion, as in Georgia, its intervention was indistinguishable from invasion. Yet while doing everything in their power to keep the former subject peoples in the path of Communism, the central authorities gave them a wide leeway in the matter of self-government. This policy,

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be it said in passing, was no doubt instrumental in winning over the minor peoples to the Bolshevist side.

The attempt to set up a proletarian dictatorship in Finland, Latvia, Esthonia, and Lithuania, having failed, and the Baltic Sea not having become the sea of the world revolution, as the Bolsheviks had hoped, the Soviet Government eventually concluded peace treaties with these countries, and with Poland, recognizing their separate status. Everywhere else Bolshevism triumphed, and by 1921 the red flag was flying over what remained of the former empire. The anti-Bolshevik forces having been crushed by the end of 1919 in the Ukraine, the territory was proclaimed a sovereign Soviet republic, with Kharkov, the center of the proletarian Don region, as the capital, and so were the regions which went Soviet in the course of the following two years: White Russia, and the Transcaucasian states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. These were not the only new political formations that arose upon the ruins of the monarchy. On the fourth anniversary of the revolution Lenin was writing; "We have given all the non-Russian nationalities their own republics or autonomous territories." [4] At the time this statement was something of an exaggeration, but if it did not accurately describe the performance, it did intimate the official policy.

From the first those ethnic groups within the borders of Soviet Russia desiring self-government were helped to it by the central authorities, acting chiefly through the Commissariat of Nationalities, which throughout its existence was presided over by Joseph Jugashvili, better known as Stalin. Paragraph eleven of the Constitution of 1918 expressly provides for the formation of autonomous units, with the privilege of membership in the R. S. F. S. R. In its early years the Commissariat of

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Nationalities was an agency for the propagation of the Communist faith among the non-Russian peoples. It was, as well, the arbiter of differences arising between autonomous states and the guardian of the interests of the national minorities, and was generally active in promoting cooperation among the several self-governing peoples. Home-rule took the form either of an autonomous "region" (*oblast*) or an autonomous republic. The former has the status of a province, while the republic has a larger measure of independence. True, international relations are in the hands of the Federal government, the republic's war office is subordinated to the headquarters of the nearest military district, and the local GPU (political police) takes its orders from the central GPU. But certain matters, notably finance, labor, economic questions, transportation, the post-office, are controlled jointly by the republic and the federal commissariats. Finally, matters relating to education, justice, public health, social insurance, agriculture and home affairs are solely within the jurisdiction of the republic. Here was a change from the old days when the administrative divisions were made without reference to the ethnic composition of the population and occasionally with a view to breaking up the unity of a subject people.

As early as March, 1918, Stalin signed a decree calling for the formation of a Tatar-Bashkir Republic. The civil war intervening, the measure remained a dead letter. The first ethnic group actually to achieve autonomy were the German settlers on the Volga, who even under the old regime had had certain privileges. They were organized in 1918 as a so-called "labor commune," which later became an autonomous republic. The establishment of the Bashkir State followed a year later. This was the first Soviet state with an Oriental, that is, Turkic

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and Moslem, population. Upon soil once ruled by the khans of the Golden Horde the Tatar Republic was proclaimed in 1920. The Volga Tatars are the dominant nationality here, and the ancient city of Kazan is the administrative and cultural center. About the same time the Karelian Republic was formed on the Finnish border, while the territories occupied by the Kalmucks, the Votyaks and the Mari were given the status of autonomous regions. Within the next two years the Crimean Republic came into being, the Komi people of the north was allotted a spacious region of its own, and the Chuvashian territory, now a republic, also became an autonomous region. Thus, by 1922 all the more important ethnic groups in the European part of the Russian federation had become masters of their own houses.

The Asiatic portion of the Federation had by that time altered its administrative map in a similar fashion. The prairies and deserts stretching between the Caspian Sea and Chinese Turkestan—a territory larger than Germany, France, Spain and Italy taken together—became the autonomous Kazak Republic (Kazakstan). Related to, but distinct from the Kazaks, is the small Turkic tribe of Kara-Kalpacks which occupies the sandy wastes between the Aral Sea and the Amu-Darya river. They form an autonomous region which is a part of Kazakstan. A similar status was granted to the Oyrats of southern Siberia. On the eastern shores of Lake Baikal the Buryat-Mongolian Republic was set up. The Yakuts also have their own republic, with a population of some 300,000 scattered over an area so vast that its smallest district would easily contain the whole of England.[5]

In the Caucasus there were grave obstacles in the way of applying the principle of self-determination. Here was a land that out-Balkaned the Balkans. It has

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been pointed out that the territory is packed with many peoples, speaking a Babel of tongues, and so commingled that it is all but impossible to fence off one group from another in a habitat distinctly its own. Add to these complexities the constant tribal feuds, the religious dissension between Moslems and Christians which had occasionally been encouraged by the imperial government, and the intense hatred felt by the aborigines for the Russians, especially the Cossacks, who had snatched the best land from the helpless natives. The Caucasus was, in fine, a powder barrel, and the revolution provided the spark.

The swarming peoples at first attempted to solve their differences in the fashion of the gingham dog and the calico cat: by eating each other up. Here as elsewhere the Bolsheviks favored the less radical method of creating self-governing units, with ethnic groups as nearly homogeneous as circumstances would permit. At present the northern Caucasus holds one autonomous republic (Daghestan), six autonomous regions and one autonomous district (Circassian), all on an area of some 35,000 square miles, and all under the R. S. F. S. R. In Transcaucasia three nominally independent Soviet republics of larger proportions arose: Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia,—which in due time formed a federation in order to preserve the peace. To secure the interests of the more important of the many minorities in these states, certain parts of Georgia and Azerbaijan were later granted autonomy, three of them as republics and two as regions. The absence of serious disturbances in the Caucasus since the close of the civil war would seem to justify the faith of Soviet statesmen in the virtues of self-determination.

The atmosphere of the early years of the Soviet era was not favorable to legalistic precision. At first no

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one knew exactly where autonomy began and where it ended and what was the competence of the various government boards. The Commissariat of Nationalities maintained a council formed of delegates sent by the autonomous units, and there was also a department of national minorities. In yet another way the Russian center kept in touch with the non-Russian peoples: the Commissariat had a representative in every local government, even in the nominally independent republics, thus trying to exert its influence beyond the confines of the Russian Federation. In the beginning, the relations of this body politic with the other Soviet republics, that is, with the Ukraine, the White Russian and the Transcaucasian states, were also confused. In point of fact, the lot of them formed a loose confederacy, with one War Office and one Foreign Office, but no other traces of a federal government.

The period of reconstruction brought about an increased feeling in favor of a closer and better organized alliance. In the middle of December, 1922, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia came together to form the Transcaucasian Federation mentioned above. Some two weeks later representatives of this Federation, as well as of the R. S. F. S. R., the Ukraine and White Russia, met in Moscow and signed an agreement creating the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Broadly speaking, this is a voluntary alliance, although the constitution grants the right of secession only to the four large members of the Union, and not to the subordinate republics of which these are composed. Furthermore, although full membership in the Union is enjoyed only by the four states mentioned above, the principle of equality is upheld: every ethnic group possessing a political organization of its own has a voice in the affairs of the Union. Each republic, whether allied or autonomous, sends five

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delegates, as each autonomous region sends one, to the Council of Nationalities.

The twelfth congress of the Communist Party, meeting in April, 1923, came out in favor of so organizing the government of the Union that it should reflect the special needs of the separate peoples. It was in fulfillment of this wish that the Council of Nationalities was created, taking the place of the Commissariat of Nationalities which was abolished the same year. Together with the Union Council, the Council of Nationalities forms the Central Executive Committee of the Union. These two bodies enjoy equal rights: no law can be passed without their joint approval. The Council of Nationalities draws up statutes in the interests of the local units, and tempers general legislation to fit their special requirements. No measure passed by a constituent republic can be vetoed without its consent. The Council also has a voice in the election of the commissars. There is only one government organ which has a higher authority than the Executive Committee of which the Council of Nationalities is, so to speak, the upper chamber, and that is the Congress of Soviets. Since the Congress represents the class principle and the Council represents the national principle, this fact symbolizes the superiority of class to nation in the Soviet scheme of things. To sum up, in the words of a Russian writer on the subject: "The Council is that body in which the interests of the separate nationalities meet, where these can discuss the matters that affect them all, state their needs, obtain information and experience which will help them in a constructive way and teach them to govern themselves in accordance with a uniform national policy of a class nature." [6]

After the Union had come into being, attention was turned to Russia's former Central Asiatic possessions.

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In 1922 there existed here three Soviet republics: the Turkestan, the Bokharan, and the Khorasmian Republic. They had superseded respectively the old Governor-generalship of Turkestan, the Emirate of Bokhara and the Khanate of Khiva. In drawing the frontiers of these provinces the imperial government had been guided by strategic, administrative and political considerations, but as usual had overlooked the ethnic composition of the population. As a result, each of them was the home of several races and none of these was a political unit,—a condition which made for much friction. Three years ago the Soviet Government, seeking to remedy the situation, took a step of far-reaching importance. The territory with a Kazak majority was handed over to Kazakstan. The mountains inhabited by the Kirghiz (or Kara-Kirghiz, not to be confused with the Kazaks who are often mistakenly referred to as Kirghiz), became an autonomous region, and more recently a republic under the R. S. F. S. R. What remained, after these units had been carved out, was divided between the Turcoman Soviet Socialist Republic (Turkmenistan) and the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbekistan), the latter containing an autonomous division in the shape of the Tadjik Republic. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were subsequently admitted to the Union, thus raising its membership to six states.

One need not go far to find the reason for the Government's concern over the national problems of the Soviet East. Stalin has indicated it in a lengthy speech before the twelfth congress of the Communist Party. The Orient, which he calls "the heavy reserves of the revolution," is watching the Soviet national policy with an eager eye. If the Government succeeds in establishing harmony and cooperation among the peoples of the Union, the oppressed masses of the East will see in the

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Union "a flag of freedom, a vanguard to be followed." [7]

Political reasons seem to have dictated the formation, in 1924, of the Moldavian Autonomous Republic along the Bessarabian border of the Ukraine, although the Moldavians (Roumanians) are outnumbered by the Ukrainians.[8] It must be remembered that the Union considers Bessarabia as Soviet territory under temporary occupation by Roumania. Moldavia appears to have been set up as a practical demonstration, to the Bessarabians across the border, of the advantages of the Soviet system, and possibly as the nucleus of a larger unit to include the as yet unredeemed provinces. Similarly, the consideration accorded the White Russian Republic may be due to a desire to impress favorably the millions of White Russians who live across the frontier under Polish dominion. The boundaries of this republic were twice changed, with the result that its original area was more than doubled, and its population more than trebled.

It scarcely needs saying that the number of distinct ethnic groups by far exceeds the number of autonomous units created thus far. No section of the Union is completely homogeneous. Indeed, the formation of the republics has in some instances placed the Russians themselves in the position of a minority group. The interests of these minorities are protected by special departments attached to local and central executive committees. Wherever possible, these groups are encouraged to form their own town and village and even country soviets, where all business is transacted in their own language. One reason for this arrangement is that it is likely to promote interest in civic affairs. Every effort is made to prevent any interference with the freedom of the minority group to live its own life.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE ROAD TO EQUALITY

THE conviction that the thorny national question had been permanently settled was among the beliefs which buoyed up the spirits of the enthusiasts for the new order early in the revolution. "The establishment of the Soviet power in Russia and the declaration of the rights of the peoples to secede has radically altered relations among the laboring masses of the peoples of Russia, has broken down the old national hostility, cut the ground from under the feet of oppression, and won for the Russian workers the confidence of their brothers not only at home, but also in Europe and Asia." Thus reads the resolution adopted by the tenth Congress of the Communist Party in March, 1921.[1] The conviction was somewhat shaken as time went on. The Communists are assured that the Union offers the machinery for the establishment of satisfactory relations among its peoples, but they now realize that this will demand much effort spread over a long period. While never doubting that they are on the right road, they have come to feel that many obstacles will have to be mastered before they reach the end of it.

One of these is "the chauvinist aberration," thundered against by orators and condemned in public resolutions. The decrees and declarations, it appears, have not as effectively exorcised the demon of intolerance as was at first believed. The cloven hoof peeps out even in Government offices and in the very ranks of the Party.

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Certain groups among the Russians are bound to regard with a quizzical eye the upstart and would-be nationalities that have risen to claim an equal standing with the formerly dominant race. On the other hand, the non-Russian peoples have not wholly cleansed their hearts of hostility toward their former masters, and a suspicion lingers with them that the Government of the Union is merely a glove over the same iron fist that they knew under the Czars. The non-Russians are mostly peasants. They find that the price of manufactured goods, which are of Russian origin, has increased much more than that of farm produce, and this naturally makes for anti-Russian feeling among them. Then, too, the wage-earning class, which is the aristocracy of the new society, in most of the non-Russian regions, as, for example, in the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkestan, is Russian. This means that such is also the majority in the local branches of the all-powerful Communist Party.

Moreover, owing to a lack of educated natives, people of Russian stock man the Government staffs in the more backward republics, as may be seen from the following figures regarding the percentage of Russians employed in Soviet offices in 1927: Uzbekistan, 61 percent; the Bashkir Republic, 65.5 percent; Kazakstan, 70 percent; the Buryat Republic, 73 percent; the Karelian Republic, 80 percent.[2] Furthermore, the fledgling governments of the newly created republics are, very humanly, sometimes guilty of disregarding the needs of the minority groups under their jurisdiction. The governmental machinery set up by the Union may be equal to the task of adjusting the conflicting interests of the various national groups, but it alone cannot eradicate the hatreds and suspicions which contribute to inter-racial friction. Taking a leaf out of the liberals' book, the

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Communists are now looking for help to mass education, in the widest sense of the word.

The gravest obstacle to the realization of the Soviet national policy is the economic disparity prevailing among the constituent nationalities. The non-Russian peoples who knew something of an industrial and mechanized civilization have seceded. Those who have remained in the Union are behind their former masters, in that their economy is largely a matter of farming, cattle-breeding, and hunting, and that their social organization is correspondingly primitive. As long as this situation exists, the equality of peoples that the revolution wrote into the statute books will not be translated into life. No one is more sharply aware of this than the Communist, who is always loud in exposing the futility of paper rights. Accordingly, no sooner did the reconstruction period begin than the State, at the prompting of the Party, committed itself to the program of bringing the economically backward peoples up to the level of the more advanced members of the Union. Indeed, how to get the Bashkirs and the Circassians, the Khirghiz and the Yakuts into line with the Russians, not only *de jure* but *de facto* is held to be the very core of the nationality problem.*

The road seemed clear. The imperial government, aware of the danger of having a restless proletariat in the outlying reaches, and wishing to protect the yet immature industries in the central provinces, had been at pains to discourage manufacturing on the borders of the realm. This state of affairs must be changed. All energies must be bent on planting industries where they had formerly been unknown. As far as possible,

* In 1920 the Soviet Government extended to the more primitive non-Russian peoples (*inorodtzy*) the privilege of military service which had been denied them under the old regime.

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factories and mills must be shifted from the central provinces to the sources from which the supplies of raw material come. Is not the wage-earning class the fundament of the Soviet system? Is it not the vanguard of the new order? The communities which adhere to a semi-feudal or patriarchal mode of life must be drawn into the circle of modern civilization.

For years this program of changing the economic complexion of the peripheral states remained no more than a pious wish. All efforts had to be concentrated upon restoring the mills and factories that had existed before the war, and expansion was out of the question. But as soon as the tension lessened, steps were taken in the direction of building up industries in the hinterland.

Already under the old regime an industry of major importance, namely, the extraction of petroleum, had gotten under way in the Caucasus. But its status, as a Russian economist has it, was extra-territorial.[3] The oil fields were owned by the treasury. Neither local capital nor local labor found employment in the production, distillation or transportation of the naphtha. Nor did the local market absorb any considerable portion of the product. The exploitation of the oil wells was entirely divorced from the economic life of the country in which they were located. Today many of these conditions still prevail. Cement and sulphur, which is used in refining the oil, come from local sources, but machinery and manufactured goods are imported from outside. Timber is brought from the Volga, and even the food consumed by the population of Baku comes from the north. Nevertheless, already in 1923 ten percent of all the men employed by the Government corporation which exploits the Baku oil fields (*Azneft*) were natives, and in other respects the industry is gradu-

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ally losing some of its extra-territorial features. Five percent of the total value of the oil extracted goes into the treasury of the Republic of Azerbaijan, where most of the wells are located. The Georgian Republic gets thirty-five percent of the profits on the manganese ores extracted within its borders. The deposits, which are the largest in the world, were leased in 1925 to a group of American capitalists. In summing up the achievements of a decade the authorities pointed with pride to the fact that in Armenia, once an exclusively peasant country, there is now a wage-earning class of 18,000.[4] In the northern Caucasus, too, some steps have been taken toward the establishment of local industries.

The cotton, the wool, the tobacco of Transcaucasia used to be transported in the raw state to the factories of Moscow and Petersburg, where they were made into finished products more cheaply than was possible in the primitive communities of the region. At present the chief staple is cotton. The absence of qualified native labor and the excessive dryness of the climate are serious obstacles to the development of a local textile industry. But, since fuel is cheap, enough mills will probably be set up to meet the local demand. Under the old regime nothing was done with the cotton crop of Turkestan on the spot except to gin it. The cleaned cotton was then shipped direct to the central provinces to be spun and woven there. An attempt is now being made to establish mills at the source of supply. But the climatic conditions in Central Asia are such that only the coarser sorts of fabric can be woven there. By way of experiment, two plants, each having 10,000 spindles, are under construction, one in the city of Ferghana (Uzbekistan), and one at Asshabad, the capital of Turkmenistan. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October revolution, it was announced that this republic now

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counted 6,000 proletarians among its population, and that the product of the mills there had increased two hundred and fifty percent since 1925.[5] Silk mills, canneries and tanneries, as well as cotton-seed oil works are also being promoted in Turkestan.

The local industries will profit by the improvement of the means of communication and the construction of electric power stations. In the Ukraine a large hydro-electric plant, the so-called Dnieprostroi, which will use the energy of the Dnieper falls, is being built. The Caucasus, with its swift mountain torrents, is especially rich in "white coal," and several plants are being erected there. One of them, at the juncture of the Kura and its tributary, the Aragva, near Tiflis, was solemnly opened on June 26, 1927, and named for Lenin. A local composer celebrated the occasion in a cantata, and the association of proletarian writers collected for publication a group of literary tributes to the power-station. On a cliff above the dam is placed a mammoth bronze statue of Lenin, twenty-five meters high and fifteen tons in weight,—the largest piece of statuary in the Union.

It must not be thought that the intention of the Soviet Government is to render the regions self-sufficient. This is not the case. They are treated as parts of one economic whole, which is the Union. Every national group possesses, either actually or potentially, administrative autonomy, but in all matters affecting the economy of the country there is centralized planning and concerted action, under the control of the Government of the Union. The tendency now is to foster economic specialization in keeping with the diversity of natural endowment, without, however, infringing upon the rights and interests of the individual republics. The present policy is to promote manu-

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factures only where conditions are most favorable as regards raw materials, fuel, and transportation. During the civil war, when the country practically fell apart, each region tended to become independent of the others as a matter of self-preservation. Thus, Turkestan, getting no grain from the central provinces, had to grow wheat instead of the much more valuable cotton, and the Georgians cut up their orchards and vineyards to plant the ground to Indian corn. This is now regarded as a sad retrogression, to be corrected as soon as possible. The more poverty-stricken autonomous regions and republics, in addition to the income from taxation, receive subsidies from the common Union funds. The budget of 1928-29 calls for the outlay of 15,000,000 rubles by way of subventions to the national republics.[6]

It has already been remarked that the non-Russian population is almost exclusively engaged in primitive land-tilling and cattle-breeding. It was of prime concern to the Bolsheviks not merely to fit their agrarian policy to the peculiar circumstances of these peoples, but also to improve and modernize their economy, and to correct the wrongs done them by the old regime. The imperial government used some of the outlying territories, such as Cis-Caucasia, Siberia, and particularly the steppes of the Kazaks and the Kirghiz, as an outlet for the excess Russian population. The administration carved out for the colonists generous holdings, at the expense of the natives, who were exploited in other ways as well. There was especially shameless land-grabbing on the territory of the present Kirghiz Republic after the suppression of the uprising of 1916.

The new dispensation gave redress, as far as possible, to the despoiled natives. These, and the Russian settlers, were granted equal rights to land and water. Not only

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the Russian kulak was shorn of his power, but also the native *beys* and *manaps*, the eastern equivalents, respectively, of the middle-class and the nobility. Those who had holdings exceeding the prescribed minimum had to part with some of their acres in favor of the land-needy farmers or cattle-breeders, mostly aborigines. In carrying out these measures, thousands of families were shifted from one place to another. On occasion the native administration, in defiance of both the letter and the spirit of the law, abused the rights of the Russians.[7]

Not that colonization is prohibited by Soviet law. The authorities of the Union are empowered to use land for that purpose, but only provided that the interests of the natives do not suffer. As a matter of fact, the problem of finding room for the excess agricultural population is likely to become pressing before long. Fortunately, the Asiatic section of the Union, particularly Siberia, offers enormous reserves of free land.

In Kazakstan the land reform was carried out in 1921-22. Tens of thousands of acres, occupied by Russian settlers, were restored to the natives. In the Kirghiz Republic it was completed by 1924, and was carried out with the aid of the Unions of poor peasants of native stock. The land seized by Russians after 1916 was restored to those who had first claim to it. The more important roads used by the nomads when they drive their herds from the summer pastures on the hills to the winter pastures on the plains were reopened, and a considerable stretch of arable land was put at the disposal of the Kirghiz people. At present an effort is being made to organize groups of neighbors into agricultural associations, which are to replace the old communes based on kinship.

In the other Central Asiatic republics the agrarian situation remained unchanged until the end of 1925.

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Here the problem was not to undo the results of the imperial colonization policy, but to alter a highly complicated system of land ownership based on privilege and sanctified by immemorial custom. In 1926, after a prolonged study of the situation, the authorities resolved to carry out a radical land reform in conformance with Soviet principles. They began with the more progressive sections of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The larger estates were expropriated, while farms whose acreage exceeded the prescribed minimum were cut down. The land reserves thus obtained were augmented by former crown lands, church property, and the area that was newly irrigated in 1925. The first to secure land grants were the tenant farmers who abounded in this region. Next came the landless hired men. In three provinces alone 142,000 dessiatines were obtained by expropriation. This area, augmented by 50,000 dessiatines of State land, provided acreage for 57,000 families, half of whom had been entirely landless.[8] Cattle and implements were obtained, either by confiscation or by forced purchase, and distributed among the farmers on long-term credit. Besides, the newly established holdings were exempted from taxes for a number of years. The reform was carried out successfully, even winning the support of the more liberal element among the Moslem clergy.

The redistribution of land on egalitarian lines, even if it is effected throughout the Central Asiatic republics, will only partly solve their agrarian problem. The fact remains that there is insufficient arable for the dense population in this region. There is an abundance of land, but without an artificial supply of water it is unfit for use. During the years of economic collapse the canals were neglected and as a result in 1922 the irrigated area was half of what it had been in 1915. At

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present every effort is being made to restore, improve and extend the canals. The sums that the Union is allotting annually out of its budget for this purpose exceed the expenditures to the same end of the old government. The work benefits from being planned and supervised in all the republics by one board: the Central Asiatic Water Bureau. In 1930 the irrigated area should exceed that of pre-war days by seventeen percent.[9] By the tenth anniversary of the revolution the cotton area in Turkmenistan had been extended through irrigation beyond its pre-war limits, and thanks to scientific methods of cultivation, the crops had increased.[10]

In the Caucasus, too, though to a lesser degree, agriculture depends upon an artificial water supply. The canal system is being enlarged in the Transcaucasian republics, particularly in Armenia and Georgia, where the land hunger is acute. The work in the three republics is done by cooperative associations under the supervision of a joint board. According to the estimate of the Planning Commission of the Transcaucasian Federation, 307,000,000 rubles are to be spent on irrigation projects in 1926-9.[11] In the northern Caucasus, too, efforts are being made both by irrigation and by drainage to bring more acres under cultivation and to add to the pasture land. The reclamation of swamp lands on a large scale is under way in White Russia.

In the republics and provinces that make up what was formerly called Siberia, the land reform tends to benefit the natives, as well as the poorer elements among the Russian settlers. The aborigines of the extreme north need especial attention. They suffered severely in the war and the revolution. At the trading stations of the tundra the trappers were no longer able to barter their furs for supplies of bread stuffs, powder, rifles, knives,

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textiles and medicines. Typhus decimated the population and an epidemic cut down the reindeer. There was a general reversion to more primitive ways of living. Among the many and diverse tasks that the Government has taken upon itself, in promoting the welfare of the minor peoples, is that of attempting to save the remnants of the northern aborigines from extinction.

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CHAPTER XV

THE CULTURAL AWAKENING

THE economic inequality of the peoples of the Union is matched by a disparity in cultural matters. With respect to these, obvious and profound changes are taking place. The principle of self-determination upon which the Bolsheviks acted from the first meant freedom for each ethnic group to develop its peculiar culture after its own fashion, as long as there was no conflict with the spirit of the Soviet regime. The Communists, while looking forward to an ultimate fusion of peoples, do not underestimate the significance, for the intervening period of proletarian dictatorship, of the national aspect of culture. Their viewpoint has been succinctly set forth by Stalin: "Proletarian culture, far from denying national culture, gives it substance. Conversely, national culture does not deny proletarian culture, but gives it form. The slogan of national culture was a bourgeois slogan when the bourgeoisie was in power, and the consolidation of nationalities took place under the aegis of the bourgeois order. The slogan of national culture became a proletarian slogan when the working class came into power and the consolidation of nationalities began to take place under the aegis of the Soviet power." [1]

The removal of the linguistic disabilities of the non-Russians was a long step in the direction chosen by the new regime. In each one of the associated and autonomous republics measures are taken to insure the devel-

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opment of the language of the majority, but the language rights of the minority groups are also safeguarded. In the Government offices the language of the majority, such as Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian, is generally used, and officials who are not proficient in it are dismissed. But every citizen may use his own tongue in his dealings with the authorities and any written official communication to him must be couched in that tongue, if so desired. It goes without saying that every group is free to use its own language in business and public life. In the court-room and in certain local soviets the language of the minority, where that minority happens to predominate in the local population, is obligatory. The underlying intention is to establish as close a contact between the Government and the masses as possible. For that purpose the effort everywhere is to fill the Government offices with people drawn from native stocks and familiar with the language and life of the masses. In the more backward regions this is still a mere desideratum. In the Ukraine all legislative acts are published both in Ukrainian and in Russian, and the more important of them also in the languages of the minorities residing in the republic. In White Russia all important decrees are printed in White Russian, Russian, Yiddish and Polish, and the inscription on the coat of arms of the State: "Proletarians of all lands, unite!" appears in all four languages. Besides, the State provides every national group, no matter whether it has political autonomy or not, with schools where instruction is given in the native tongue of the pupils.

In commenting on the progress of education in the Soviet State, Lunacharsky recently observed that the shifting of the schools to the new linguistic basis is "the most important factor in popular education." [2]

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It has already been pointed out that in the old days the native languages other than Russian were barred from the educational institutions. In the schools for Kalmucks the pupils were permitted to use their native Mongol idiom only for the first two months of their attendance. After that a boy caught speaking it in the classroom, the dormitory, or at games, had to wear about his neck a sign reading: "It is forbidden to speak Kalmuck," and was left without dinner.[3] Only as a rare exception did vernaculars appear in the curriculum as subjects. True, on the first of July, 1914, a law was passed permitting the partial use of the native tongue as a medium of instruction in private schools, provided these received no subventions from the *zemstvos*, or municipalities. But by and large, lay schools where the teaching is conducted in the non-Russian tongues are a new, post-revolutionary phenomenon.

The de-Russification of instruction, like other school matters, is in the hands of the local commissariats of education, of which there is one in each of the allied and autonomous republics. The reform is being carried out with a strong hand and great tenacity of purpose. Throughout the non-Russian sections a considerable proportion of the primary, secondary, and trade schools have been "nationalized," that is, transformed into "national" institutions, say, Azerbaijan, Tatar, or Yakut, with the corresponding vernacular as the medium of instruction. Some 2,000,000 Ukrainian children are now being taught in their native idiom.[4] It is also the duty of each commissariat of education to provide the ethnic minorities residing within a given republic with schooling in their own language. Thus, there are Polish Government schools in White Russia, Chuvashian schools in the Tatar Republic, Ukrainian schools in the Moldavian Republic. In the R. S. F. S. R.

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there are over 5,000 schools for such minorities, that is, for Germans living outside the Republic of the Volga Germans, for Bashkirs settled beyond the frontiers of their territory, and so on, as well as for those ethnic groups who for one reason or another have no political autonomy.

The initial difficulties to be overcome in "nationalizing" the schools were formidable. To begin with, there were no teachers. Accordingly, special normal schools were set up, and their number is growing. Then there were no books for the classes. Most of the non-Russian tongues are uncultivated vernaculars and it was necessary, therefore, to fit them to the novel needs of instruction, to elaborate terminology, to systematize spelling, and, in the case of not a few obscure tongues, to supply the very alphabet.

This is usually based on the Russian, or preferably on the Latin alphabet, since the fact that the former used to be forced on an unwilling population attaches odium to it. As in Turkey, the Latin characters are being substituted for the Arabic now used by the Moslem peoples of the Union. The reform, which is being carried out by a semi-official committee, is financed by the central government. The new alphabet is being devised so as to fit the peculiarities of all the Turkic languages spoken in the Union, and modernized grammars and dictionaries are in preparation. In the northern Caucasus the entire literature in the local unliterary idioms is printed in the new characters. In Azerbaijan they have enjoyed an official status since 1924. The change is less easily effected where the peoples are more cultivated and already have books in the old alphabet, as is the case of the Volga Tatars, who possessed a literature of some five thousand titles at the beginning of the revolution.[5] In this connection

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it may be mentioned that a veritable epidemic of simplified spelling is raging over the Union, to the delight of the untutored, for whom learning is thus made easier, and equally to the distress of the pedant and the purist.

In fourteen of the minor tongues spoken in the R. S. F. S. R. there are new textbooks for all the grades, and texts in other languages are in preparation. This year the Council for the Enlightenment of the non-Russian Nationalities, under the Commissariat of Education of that republic, is planning to issue text-books in thirty-four languages, juveniles in twenty-three, political pamphlets in twenty-seven, and scholarly works, such as dictionaries, grammars, folk-lore collections, in twelve languages, in all some thirty thousand pages of text.[6]

Everywhere, particularly in the hinterland, the demand for schooling is extraordinary, and there is also a strong thirst for the rudiments of education among adults who have had to grow up without it. Much work is being done to meet this demand in the east, which has always been a land of illiteracy. In Uzbekistan the number of schools has increased fourfold since 1923.[7] In Kazakstan there were, in 1926-7, 1,600 native schools, with 80,000 pupils.[8] Before the revolution there were hardly any literate Uzbek or Turcoman women. At present, of every ten schools in Turkestan, one is a school for girls. It must be noted that the more well-to-do and ambitious members of the non-Russian communities prefer to send their children to the Russian schools, because these are better equipped and because they offer the advantages of a superior culture.

The universities everywhere are still largely Russian in language and spirit. Each year a number of vacancies are set aside in them for young people of what would

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formerly have been classed as "alien" stock, so that an opportunity for a college education knocks on the very tentflap of the nomad. At the same time, some efforts are being made to crown the educational system of the non-Russian peoples with institutions of higher learning. The University of Minsk is being gradually subjected to the same process of "nationalization" as the White Russian primary and secondary schools, and so are the colleges of the Ukraine. Georgia and Armenia have universities of their own, and there is a new one at Tashkent as well for the Central Asiatic republics. About one-fifth of the student body here consists of natives, many of them attending the preparatory school connected with the university.[9] Higher technical and agricultural schools for the non-Russian population are also taking shape. Since 1921 there have functioned in Moscow the Stalin Communist University of the Peoples of the East and the University of the National Minorities of the West. Both were founded by the now defunct Commissariat of Nationalities for the purpose of fitting the natives, especially Orientals, for propaganda and for government work in the newly created States. Scores of nationalities are represented in the student body. Instruction is partly in Russian, partly in the native tongues of the students.

However earnest the efforts to conduct classes in the local tongues and to adapt the curriculum to local needs and conditions, the sentiments, the guiding viewpoint, the social philosophy, are in theory everywhere the same. School books are supposedly built according to identical principles, no matter in what language they may be printed, and are written in the same spirit of allegiance to the present Soviet State and the future Communist society. In Party circles there is some dissatisfaction with the textbooks, particularly those in the Turkic

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vernaculars, used in the eastern schools. Since there are not enough educated men of Communist persuasion to prepare such manuals, recourse must perforce be had to intellectuals bred in the old tradition. As a result, it is alleged, the books are infected with religiosity and anti-Soviet, pan-Turkic bias, revealing itself in a partiality for Osmanli forms of speech. Secularization of the schools has been a leading point in the educational policy of the new regime. The only exception to the rule forbidding the teaching of religion in the classroom to young people under eighteen are the Central Asiatic republics, where Islam has a strong hold on the population. Here religious schools are tolerated, and so too are courts administering the Mahommedan canon law (*shari'a*).

If elementary textbooks form a large proportion of the printed matter in the unliterary tongues, there are also brief manuals of instruction in the conduct of the practical affairs of life, such as how to care for an infant or how to select a milch cow, as well as pamphlets on Soviet civics, and even some tales and song-books. Indeed, there is rapidly growing up a new literature in many languages, some of which have hitherto had scarcely a bowing acquaintance with either script or print. The mute are finding their tongues. Those groups which possess something of an intellectual class and a cultural tradition make an impressive showing. In Tatar one finds practically every form of literature, using the term broadly, from manuals of physics to collections of poetry, both original and translated. The body of publications in White Russian is assuming respectable proportions, while the output of books in the Ukraine compares favorably with that of any other minor European state. In fact, as regards the number of titles issued, the output of 1925 gave this republic the eighth

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place in the world's book production.[10] In 1926-7 more books—most of them, properly speaking, pamphlets—were issued in the Ukrainian language than during the period from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the revolution.[11] The hunger for the printed word is extraordinary. It is to some extent satisfied by the growing periodical press in the local tongues. There are hundreds of local libraries, rural reading-rooms and clubs with book-shelves, where the village intellectuals foregather. In the east, the ubiquitous tea-houses are taking on the function of such meeting-places.

The cultural awakening is not confined to literature alone. Native theatres are taking their rise where they were hitherto unheard of and blossoming out where they formerly knew only a wretched existence. The Ukrainian stage, though it originated in the sixties, only came into its own at the beginning of the revolution, and is rapidly maturing. The Tatar theatre, which originated in 1906 in Ufa, has taken on new life. A brick barn at Cheboksary, where lime bast was once stored, became in 1920 the first Chuvashian playhouse. Another newcomer is the Votyak Theatre, where realistic comedies in this primitive dialect have been produced since the commencement of the new era. In Daghestan a dramatic studio has been giving plays in several of the local languages. There is hardly a corner of the Soviet empire where there is not some attempt at theatricals, and often there is an effort to connect them with the native folk-drama.

The outlook for the other arts, which are developing more slowly, is auspicious. Never before has the atmosphere been so favorable to an art expression rooted in the half-submerged traditions of inarticulate groups. The local artists are commencing to form associations and hold exhibits of their work. The first Siberian

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exposition of the visual arts, held in 1927, showed oils and crayon drawings by Buryats, including a sketch for a decor to be used in the Buryat theatre. There are native art schools and music schools and singing societies which perpetuate the local balladry. The handicrafts among the minor peoples of the Union, as elsewhere, are apt to go down before machine production, but their decay may be halted, if not partly averted, by the interest in folk art which is everywhere asserting itself. Where the common man is exalted, all forms of folk expression are likely to gain an unwonted prestige.

This appreciation is one side of the movement for regional study (*krayevedeniye*) which is a prominent feature of intellectual life under the Soviets. Throughout the country educated men and women get together for the purpose of studying the resources, the geography, the history, the ethnology, the economics of their country or province. Everyone helps: the authorities, the colleges, the schools. Expeditions make their way into the less frequented corners and bring back treasures of the most varied description: from fossiles to folksongs. Some results of these efforts find their way into print, while the specimens of material culture are brought to rest in local museums.

This regionalist enthusiasm has a strong practical streak. It is of particular value to the backward, peripheral regions. More than the rest of the country, they stand in need of exploration. Every one of the newly launched national units is eager to form some central body for the conduct of local researches, which, aside from yielding tangible results, adds to the sense of national dignity. Since the beginning of the new era Kiev has been the seat of an Academy of Sciences, which has been so active in the brief period of its exis-

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tence as to come near shifting the center of Ukrainian scholarship from Lwow in Galicia to the ancient city on the Dnieper. A similar research organization, which goes by the name of the Institute of White Russian Culture, has sprung up in Minsk. The academic itch is affecting even the wild mountaineers of the Caucasus. Witness the Ingushetian Scientific Research Institute and the Academy of Abkhasian Language and Literature.

Finding themselves short of competent scholars, some of the national republics have appealed to the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad for help, with the result that the latter has established a special Commission for the Study of Allied and Autonomous Republics. In its investigations this body, as well as the Academy's Commission for the Study of the Ethnic Composition of the Population of the U. S. S. R. and Adjacent Countries, calls upon local talent wherever possible. It may be noted that the Academy of Leningrad, for which Peter the Great laid the foundation in the hope of shedding lustre on the empire he ruled, is now, nominally at least, no longer an exclusively Russian institution, but rather a central agency of research for all the peoples of the Union. There are several other learned bodies in Moscow and Leningrad which specialize in the study of the Caucasian and Oriental peoples. To quote from the preface to a monumental work on Yakutia recently published by the Academy: "The peripheral regions are no longer forgotten and neglected; they participate in the common work." [12]

The revival of local cultures goes hand in hand with the spread of the civilizing influences of the west. These are carried by the books, the papers, the schools, the clubs. Modern ideas are sponsored by the Communist Party and put into practice by the national govern-

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ments. The soviet that accompanies the Kirghiz nomads in the summer as they move from pasture to pasture, and is housed in a white *yurta* flying the red flag, includes a judge, a prosecutor, a medical unit, a sanitation unit, a traveling library, and an itinerant moving-picture theatre. The secular spirit of the new regime has penetrated far into the hinterland. Even among the Moslems the prestige of the clergy is waning. Here and there the revolution brought about a backward plunge into old pagan ways. When the Bolsheviks came and the Church lost its authority, the Mari peasantry, who were converted to Christianity about four generations ago, partly by force, partly by bribery, hurled their icons into the ravines and began to pray in the sacred groves to their ancient god Yumo.[13] On the whole, however, the trend is away from religious observances of every description.

A powerful ferment is at work among the dark, inert masses of the Soviet east. Immemorial folk-ways are being uprooted and falling into decay. The radical elements among the natives find leadership in the ranks of the Party and an ally in the Government. In trying to eradicate objectionable social customs, the authorities have been relying partly on prohibitive legislation. The wearing of the binding camisoles affected by generations of Kalmuck women, in defiance of health, is now a criminal offense. In 1923 the buying and selling of brides among all the peoples of Central Asia was abolished by decree. This year a bill was drawn up providing severe punishment for those who persist in the practice of vendetta. The authorities have come to feel, however, that in the matter of social reform it is better to depend upon education than upon the might of the law.

The most striking evidence of social change among

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the non-Russian peoples is the new status of the wome Soviet law is based upon the complete equality of t sexes. The land reform has given the women an equ right with the men to agricultural holdings. It is no surprising, therefore, to find the Moslem women in rebellion against the subjection and seclusion that has been their lot for so long. They take an active part in political life, not only voting, but also electioneering and serving in the local soviets. At the All-Union Congress of Working and Peasant Women which took place in October, 1927, there were delegates representing organized women from all the national republics and regions. Even the Samoyeds sent representatives. Everywhere, as a symbol of emancipation, the Moslem women are laying aside the *paranja*, a robe with a horsehair veil for the face. It is estimated that prior to the tenth anniversary of the revolution, some 90,000 Uzbek women had taken this daring step.[14] In Samarkand, in the shadow of Tamerlane's mosques, they made bonfires of the discarded garments. In former years the laying aside of the veil was considered a capital offense, and in many sections it is still unsafe for a Moslem woman to appear uncovered on the streets. Women who are molested receive hearings in court ahead of their turn and pensions are given to the families of those who perish in the battles fought over the paranja.

The movement for the emancipation of eastern women—it is known as the Attack—is endorsed and, indeed, largely captained by the Communist Party. Since female labor plays an important role in Soviet manufacturing, the industrial program in the Moslem sections of the Union involves the increasing of the labor supply by the removal of age-old restrictions from the women. The Communists would bring the Moslem woman out of the home, not only that she may partic-

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te in public life, but also that she may take her place de the men in the mills and factories and in the ductive cooperatives. That headway has been made this direction may be seen from the fact that thousands of Uzbek women have joined artels of rug-makers and silk-weavers, while in the mines and mills of the Baimak Trust, seventy-five percent of the workers are Bashkir women.[15] A network of commissions for improving the working and living conditions of the women of the east offers them special schools, nurseries, maternity clinics, clubs, as well as legal aid, and training in matters that have always been their concern.

In summing up the cultural situation of the non-Russian peoples, it may be said that, like the rest of the citizenry of the Union, they owe their first allegiance to the principles upon which the new order is founded, but that, insofar as they are loyal to those principles, they may be true to their own selves. For the first time in their history they are free to achieve a national life of their own, and without question they are taking advantage of the opportunity. So scrupulous are the authorities in recognizing the claim of every group to a separate identity, that they have given the impression of trying to preserve moribund civilizations and to turn the country into an ethnographic museum. Yet the purpose of the Soviet policy is not so much to emphasize differences as to promote cooperation among the divergent groups. Which of the newly constituted nationalities will be submerged, and which will successfully resist assimilation depends not on official assistance, but on intrinsic vitality.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A

THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION

(The figures in this table are those of the census of December 17, 1926; they were published in the Moscow *Izvestia* of March 4, 1928).

People	Thousands	%	People	Thousands	%
Russians	77,760	52.9	Turcomans	766	0.5
Ukrainians	31,195	21.2	Bashkirs	714	0.4
White Russians	4,739	3.2	Votyaks	504	0.3
Kazaks	3,960	2.7	Mari	428	0.3
Uzbeks	3,904	2.6	Chechen group	393	0.3
Tatars	3,015	2	Moldavians	279	0.2
Jews	2,601	1.8	Ossets	272	0.2
Georgian group	1,821	1.2	Karelians	248	0.2
Azerbaijans	1,706	1.2	Mishari (Tatar)	243	0.2
Armenians	1,567	1.1	Buryats	237	0.2
Mordvinians	1,340	0.9	Komi	221	0.2
Germans	1,238	0.8	Circassian group	219	0.2
Chuvashes	1,117	0.7	Yakuts	215	0.2
Tadjiks	978	0.7	Greeks	214	0.2
Poles	782	0.5	Others	3,554	2.4
Kirghiz	769	0.5			
			Total	146,999	100.0

The ethnic composition of the population:

Slavs	78.1%
Turkic peoples	11.6%
Caucasians (Japhetic peoples)	3.2%
Finno-Ugrians	2.2%
Others	4.9%

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TABLE B

SOVIET STATES

[Abbreviations: S.F.S.R.—Socialist Federative Soviet Republic; S.S.R.—Socialist Soviet Republic; A.S.S.R.—Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic; A.R.—Autonomous Region (*Oblast*).]

	State	When Founded	Area (Thousand sq. kilom.)	Population (Thousands)	Capital City
1.	*Russian* S.F.S.R.	July 10, 1918 (Constitution adopted)	19,748.3	100,858	Moscow
2.	Bashkir A.S.S.R.	March 23, 1919	162.6	2,742.8	Ufa
3.	Buryat-Mongol A.S.S.R.	June 4, 1923	379.4	491.3	Verkhneudinsk
4.	Chuvash A.S.S.R.	April 21, 1925 (Proclaimed A.R. June 24, 1922)	18.3	894.5	Cheboksary
5.	Crimean A.S.S.R.	October 18, 1921	25.3	714.1	Simferopol
6.	Daghestan A.S.S.R.	January 20, 1921	54.2	788.1	Makhach-Kale
7.	Volga Germans, A.S.S.R. of	July 19, 1923 (Proclaimed Labor Commune 1918)	26.7	571.8	Pokrovsk
8.	Karelian A.S.S.R.	July 24, 1923 (Proclaimed Labor Commune August 4, 1920)	143.3	269.7	Petrozavodsk
9.	Kazak A.S.S.R. (Kazakstan)	October 14, 1924 (Proclaimed Kirghiz A.S.S.R. August 20, 1920)	2,957.8	6,491.7	Kizil-Orda (to be transferred to Alma-Ata)

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10.	Kara-Kalpak A.R.	October 14, 1924	124	304.6	Turtkul
11.	Kirghiz A.S.S.R.	February, 1926 (Proclaimed Kara-Kirghiz A.R. October 14, 1924; Kirghiz A.R. May 27, 1925)	195.2	993.1	Frunze
12.	Tatar A.S.S.R.	May 27, 1920	68.6	2,594	Kazan
13.	Yakut A.S.S.R.	April 20, 1922	4,023.3	445.7	Yakutsk
14.	Adighe (Circassian) A.R.	July 27, 1922	3.1	114.2	Krasnodar
15.	Ingush A.R.	June 7, 1924	3.2	75.1	Vladikavkaz
16.	Chechen A.R.	December 1, 1922	9.2	309.9	Grozny
17.	Kabardo-Balkar A.R.	September 1, 1921	12.2	204	Nalchik
18.	Kalmuck A.R.	November 4, 1920	74.5	141.6	Ellista
19.	Karachai A.R.	March 26, 1926	8.3	64.6	Batalpashinsk (pro.tem.)
20.	Komi A.R.	August 22, 1921	434.1	207.2	Ust-Sysolsk
21.	Mari A.R.	November 4, 1920	23.5	482.7	Krasnokokshaisk
22.	North Ossetian A.R.	June 7, 1924	6	152.4	Vladikavkaz
23.	Oirat A.R.	June 1, 1922	88	88.4	Ulala
24.	Votyak A.R.	November 9, 1920	30.3	756.3	Izhevsk
25.	*Ukrainian S.S.R.*	December 17, 1917 (Proclaimed again on December 11, 1918)	451.7	29,020.3	Kharkov
26.	Moldavian A.S.S.R.	October 14, 1924	81.3	572.2	Balta (to be transferred to Birzula)
27.	*White Russian S.S.R.*	January 1, 1919 (Proclaimed again on August 1, 1920)	126.8	4,983.9	Minsk

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	State	When Founded	Area (Thousand sq. kilom.)	Population (Thousands)	Capital City
28.	*Transcaucasian* S.F.S.R.	December 13, 1922 (Constitution adopted)	184.5	5,860.3	Tiflis
29.	Armenian S.S.R.	November 2, 1920	30.9	879.9	Erivan
30.	Azerbaijan S.S.R.	April 27, 1920	84.7	2,314	Baku
31.	Nakhichevan A.S.S.R.	1923	5.3	104.9	Nakhichevan
32.	Karabakh A.R.	June 7, 1923	4.2	125.3	Stepanakert
33.	Georgian S.S.R.	February 25, 1921	68.9	2,666.4	Tiflis
34.	Abkhasian S.S.R.	March 4, 1921	8.1	201.7	Sukhum-Kale
35.	Adzharian A.S.S.R.	June 16, 1921	2.6	131.6	Batum
36.	South Ossetian A.R.	April 20, 1922	3.7	87.4	Tzkhinvali
37.	*Uzbek* S.S.R. (Uzbekistan)	December 5, 1924 (Entered U.S.S.R. February 17, 1925)	340.3	5,275	Samarkand
38.	Tadjik S.S.R.	February 4, 1925	154.1	827.4	Dushambe
39.	*Turcoman* S.S.R. (Turkmenistan)	December, 1924 (Entered U.S.S.R. February 6, 1925)	491.2	991.9	Asshabad (formerly Poltoratzk)

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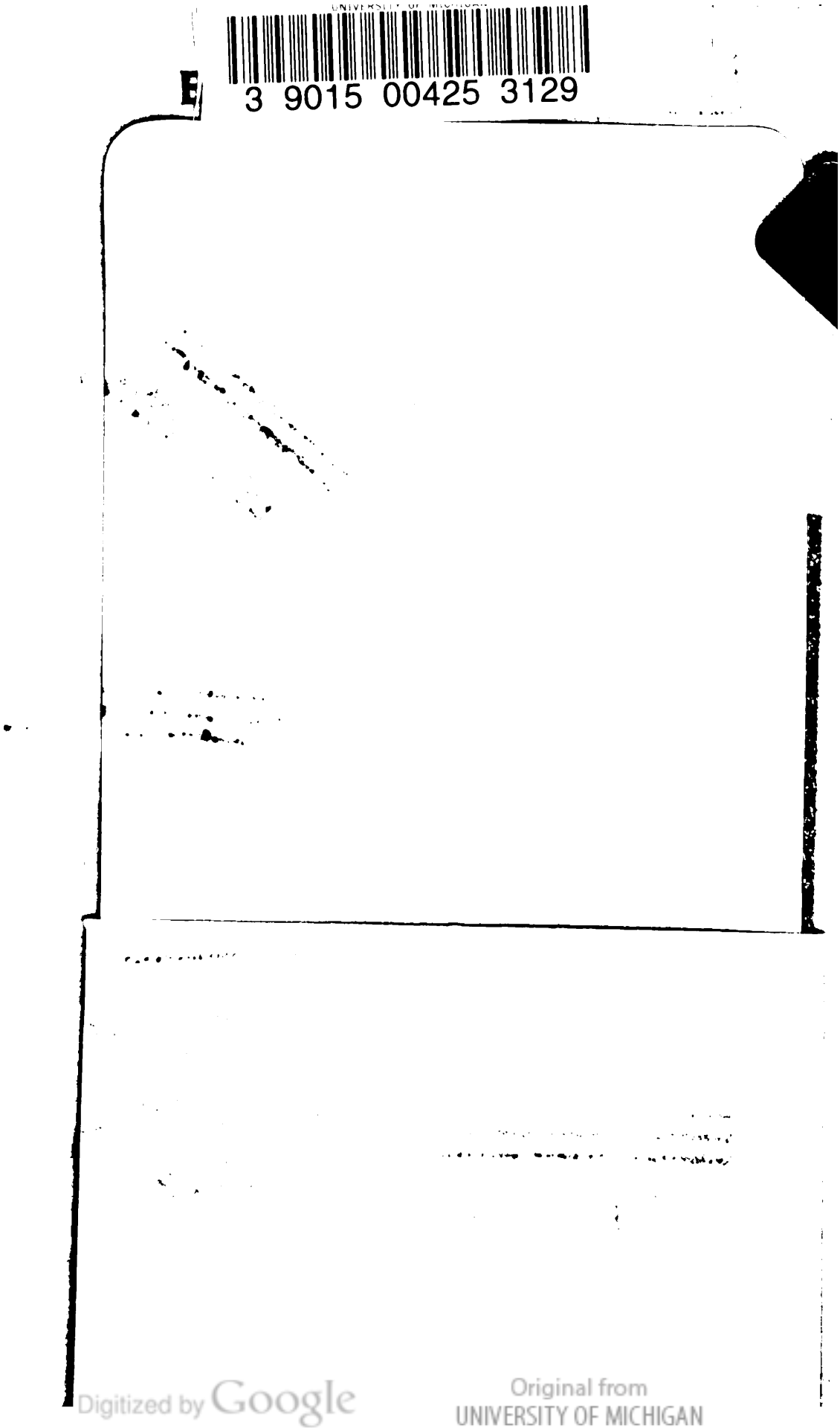

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